F-M Ambulance Service and Sanford AirMed teamed up to celebrate EMS week by hosting an Open House. The weather was great and team members from both agencies enjoyed showing the public why they love their job! Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate!
Commitment to Safety

Emergency response is dangerous – emergency drivers are often driving at fast speeds in sub-par conditions, hoping that other drivers see and hear them as they try to save lives. According to Zoll, emergency response vehicles are thirteen times more likely to be involved in an accident. When an ambulance crashes, the cost is high – costs associated with a fatal crash can reach in excess of $1 million.

F-M Ambulance Service has had a long-standing commitment to the safety of our team members, our patients and the public. Part of this commitment to safety is to make sure that our drivers are among the safest on the roads at all times. F-M Ambulance Service has been utilizing the Road Safety system by Zoll since 2001. Road Safety helps track the movement and activity of all ambulances at all times. Recently, all of our trucks have been updated with the Road Safety 4000, which includes a driver feedback system that delivers proactive coaching for improving safety and reducing vehicle maintenance costs.

Operations Manager Wade Hockert says, “We have been using the Zoll Road Safety for many years at F-M Ambulance Service. This update will allow us to not only help create a safer driver, but also save us money by reducing wear and tear on the ambulances.” The Road Safety system generally pays for itself in one to two years. Depending on usage, each vehicle saves at least $3,000 - $5,000 annually.

The Zoll Road Safety system is a proven solution to improve safety and significantly reduce costs through behavior modifications. Road Safety modifies behavior through real-time audible warnings that alert the driver if he or she is operating the vehicle in an unsafe manner. This immediate feedback allows drivers to correct driving behavior before it leads to a crash. Audible alert tones also alert drivers that they are approaching vehicle safety limits so corrective actions can be taken. The audio warnings will continue and increase in intensity until the driver corrects the issue.

So how does the Road Safety system actually work? A small box is installed into each truck, which monitors nearly everything that the driver does. Drivers are required to clock in with a special key fob before they are able to drive the truck. Drivers must have a spotter to back up, otherwise they will hear an alert tone and a notification will be sent to their record. The system monitors g-forces like hard-braking and fast-cornering. If an employee brakes suddenly, clicks will notify them that they are getting close to the braking g-force limit. If they go over, a tone will alert them of that. The system also monitors lights and sirens, seat belt use, turn signals and speed.

F-M Ambulance Service is proud to use the Zoll Road Safety system – it not only helps keep our team members safe, it also helps reduce the wear and tear on our trucks along with maintenance costs.
Narcan – The Miracle Drug?

Opioid overdoses continue to be a major public health problem in the Fargo-Moorhead area. It has contributed significantly to accidental deaths among those who use or misuse illicit and prescription opioids. Recently, a medication called Naloxone, or Narcan, has been highlighted as a miracle drug for opioid overdoses. Will Narcan work for everyone, every time? Before answering that question, here’s a little information on opioid overdoses from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Opioids include illegal drugs such as heroin, as well as prescription medication used to treat pain such as morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, hydromorphone and buprenorphine. Opioids work by binding to specific receptors in the brain, spinal cord, and gastrointestinal tract. In doing so, they minimize the body’s perception of pain. However, stimulating the opioid receptors or “reward centers” in the brain can also trigger other systems of the body, such as those responsible for regulating breathing.

How does an opioid overdose occur? When a person takes opioids, a variety of effects can occur, ranging from pleasure to nausea, vomiting, severe allergic reaction, and an overdose, in which breathing and heartbeat slow or even stop. Opioid overdoses can occur when a patient deliberately misuses a prescription opioid or an illicit drug such as heroin. It can also occur when a patient takes an opioid as directed, but the prescriber miscalculated the opioid dose or an error was made by the dispensing pharmacist or the patient misunderstood the directions for use.

Anyone who uses opioids for long-term management of chronic pain is at risk of opioid overdose, as are persons who use heroin. Tolerance develops when someone uses an opioid drug regularly, so that their body becomes accustomed to the drug and needs a larger or more frequent dose to continue to experience the same effect.

F-M Ambulance Service has been carrying the medication Naloxone, or Narcan, for well over 25 years. So why does it seem like the media and our community has just learned about this “miracle” drug? Opioid overdoses have recently become more common and prevalent than years ago.

Narcan can be very useful for the right person, at the right time. It is not a miracle drug for everyone. Narcan does not “fix” or “reverse” the drug used in an overdose. In large quantities, drugs like heroin tell the body to stop breathing. Narcan temporarily blocks that message and allows the person to breathe. As soon as the Narcan wears off, the drug may tell the body to stop breathing again. This is why it is important for anyone who is experiencing an overdose to get medical attention immediately by calling 9-1-1 and continuing medical care to the hospital. Once Narcan is given it can take up to 2 minutes for it to start working. Narcan also only works on certain drugs – it won’t work for everything.

If you know or suspect someone has overdosed, the best thing that you can do for them is to call 9-1-1. If you don’t know if they are breathing, start CPR, including breathing, for the patient. If someone has overdosed on an opioid and their breathing has stopped, as long as you breathe for them, you are helping them. If there is a second rescuer there that has access to Narcan, that person can prepare to administer it as long as they know how. If they don’t know how, the 9-1-1 dispatcher can walk them through the directions on the phone. If you are the only person there, focus on breathing. The time that it takes you to find and give the Narcan is time that your loved one isn’t breathing and brain cells are dying because they aren’t receiving oxygen.

Narcan can be a very beneficial drug – if given to the right person at the right time. It can and has helped save many lives, but it only works in very specific circumstances. Knowing how to do CPR and rescue breathing is just as important as having Narcan on hand. Good rescue breaths that can help sustain oxygenation to the brain will help the patient immensely.
In the fall of 2015, Fargo residents Patrick and Annette Schultz had just returned home after going to their local gym. Patrick didn’t feel well, but didn’t think it was anything too serious. Suddenly, he yelled for help and collapsed. Thanks to the quick action of many people, Patrick is alive and well today. But would this scenario have had the same outcome if Annette hadn’t known to call 9-1-1 immediately? If the dispatcher hadn’t told Annette to start doing compressions on her husband? If the quick response of the police and fire departments didn’t happen, or if advanced care from an ambulance wasn’t immediately enroute?

F-M Ambulance Service, in conjunction with several other public service agencies in our community, is looking deeper into survivability of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo area. Working together, we would like to develop a community-wide initiative to give local residents the best possible chance at survival.

If someone in our community suffers a sudden cardiac arrest tomorrow, how likely is he or she to survive?

How many community members can recognize the symptoms of cardiac arrest and know how to help?

Do our community’s schools and public buildings have access to automated external defibrillators (AEDs)?

How many community members know how to perform hands-only CPR?

These are all questions that the Heart Smart Community group hopes to answer. The workgroup plans to assess the current situation in our community, determine our strengths and weaknesses, and then set goals for how we can create the best chance of survival for all community members to survive a sudden cardiac arrest.

Since approximately 80% of all cardiac arrest occur in a home, it is important that everyone in a household knows how to recognize signs and symptoms of a heart attack and know how to access care quickly – before it turns into a cardiac arrest. We want to make sure all community members know how to perform hands-only CPR if necessary, since immediate CPR can double or even triple the chances of survival. As a community EMS system, we also want to make cardiac arrest calls an opportunity to work as a group and help save a life – not as an exercise in futility. Measuring overall EMS system performance can be extremely difficult, given the variables in operating configurations and the multiple places that data must be obtained. Our goal is to work with all agencies to help develop a thorough, overall tracking system for cardiac arrest patients.

By partnering together, F-M Ambulance Service, along with many other agencies in the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo communities, want to make a Heart Smart Community. Our group needs key partners to help create buy-in from community members, businesses and organizations – no one organization can do this alone. Partnering together for a common goal will help offset costs associated with planning local events, advertising and community education. We need community leadership and organizations that are willing to work together to help develop a strategic plan and community awareness campaign to make our community Heart Smart.
Community Paramedic: Promoting Health & Healing

In a recent message, Sanford President Paul Richard said, “The Sanford mission of dedicated to the work of health and healing goes beyond the delivery of the core health care services that we provide every day. Our mission is a call to find ways to support and advance the goals of the communities and region where we all live and work.” He continued to say that there are many Sanford programs that are less visible to the public, but demonstrate our commitment to improving the human condition.

One of the programs that may seem less visible, but offers huge rewards for those involved in it, is the F-M Ambulance Service Community Paramedic program. This program delivers in-home services to people with chronic conditions that may otherwise fall through the cracks and be missed. Richards says, “While there is no financial reimbursement for these programs, they do reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and admissions and help with our ability to timely discharge patients.” Programs like the Community Paramedics help provide treatment and promote health and healing in response to identified community needs. They go beyond the core health care service that we normally provide to care for a high-risk group in our community who may otherwise not receive the care that they need.

Thank you to our Community Paramedics at F-M Ambulance Service for stepping up and taking care of those in need. Although you may not hear it every day, your commitment to providing top-notch care for these people is truly appreciated.

Engelstad Recognized

Kristi Engelstad has been recognized as the 2016 Clay County Safe Roads Coalition Outstanding EMS Partner. The Coalition work with engineers, education, EMS and law enforcement to identify, initiate and implement strategies which will help reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on Clay County roads. Congratulations, Kristi!

Welcome to the Team!

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>David Miller</td>
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<td>Kari Beth McIntire</td>
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Did You Know...

F-M Ambulance Service broke another 24-hour record for calls – on Saturday, FMA responded to 107 calls. The previous record was 105, which was set earlier this year.

We had 48 patient contacts that were related to the Fargo Marathon – 18 of those people were transported to local hospitals. We are proud of our team members who worked that day – not only at the marathon, but also covering the other areas of our community.
2016 Fargo Marathon Pictures

Did You Know…

- In May, F-M Ambulance Service teamed up with the Boy Scouts to help a large group of them achieve their Emergency Preparedness Badges. Over 85 Scouts learned basic first aid and how to improvise to create useful equipment if they were in the wilderness and needed to provide care. Scouts also participated in a full-scale mass casualty exercise. Twelve patients were moulaged to look as if they had been struck by a tornado at a camp site. The students were excellent at triaging and providing care to those who were injured. After the drill was completed, F-M Ambulance Service was recognized for its dedication to the youth of our community.

- Scott Helmer and Brett Wigglesworth successfully completed the 4-day NIMS All-Hazards Planning Section Chief FMEA course. This was the first Type III Incident Command System training course held through the ND Department of Emergency Services. Scott and Brett represented both the ND IMAT team and F-M Ambulance Service and are now both certified to be Planning Section Chiefs in a disaster event.
The Sanford Health EMS Education team has been busy! Check out all of the exciting things happening at SHEMSE!

- We are excited to welcome Thomas Taylor, Jr. as a full-time team member. Tom will coordinate the EMR and EMT courses as well as public relations events. Tom was a police officer in Hawley, MN for many years and also has a long history in career and volunteer EMS.

- On May 7, 2016 we had nearly 100 students in our building, which was our largest lab day ever. Students from the EMT, AEMT and paramedic programs as well as a BLAST class filled every room in the building. The students all enjoyed a lunch grilled by Bob and Carmen!

- We have been busy with many conferences – Kelly Wanzek, Bob Klein, Laurie Hill and Kyle Janssen manned our booth and ran Andy the Ambulance at the North Dakota EMS Rendezvous in Bismarck, while Tom Dobrzynski and Ron Lawler taught at both the North Dakota EMS Rendezvous and the Minnesota Teaching and Learning Conference in Eagan.

- SHEMSE will be holding our second EMT Boot Camp this summer. The course will meet Monday through Fridays from 8 AM – 5 PM beginning on June 20 and conclude on July 22 (the week of July 4 is off). This course will be a little different than normal, as we are working with the ND Division of EMS on a pilot program to replace the old NREMT skill sheet practical test with a scenario based practical exam. The pilot program will be tested in all of our EMT programs throughout the next year. After one year, any necessary changes will be made, and the program will be developed into a standard for all EMT programs in ND.

- If you have children aged 11-15 interested in babysitting this summer, our BLAST (Babysitter Lessons and Safety Training) class would be perfect for them! It meets on Saturdays and covers lessons in basic CPR, first aid and child care skills.

- Kelly Wanzek is finishing her Community Paramedic (CP) certification this month. Kelly will be the coordinator of the CP education program that we look forward to starting this fall.

- This spring, we successfully completed our first AEMT (pre-paramedic) program. Many students took the course to move on to paramedic school, while other students were current employees adding to their certification level. We will continue to hold this course each spring semester.

- Abdul-Rahman Mohammed, our paramedic student from Ghana, has completed spring semester of the paramedic program and is getting ready to move into the Capstone course. The Capstone portion of the program is where students show their ability to start working as an entry level paramedic. This summer Abdul-Rahman will also be getting a chance to ride at other services in the region to experience the diversity of the United States EMS system.