



F-M AMBULANCE SERVICE VITAL SIGN



Spring 2010

Compassion, Excellence, Community Service

Tim Meyer Hired As Quality Resource Manager

F-M Ambulance is pleased to announce that Tim Meyer started as the Quality Resource Manager on February 1, 2010. As Quality Resource Manager, Meyer's responsibilities will be to oversee the continuous quality improvement efforts in the areas of clinical and medical quality, human resources, specialty transportation, and healthcare partner relations. Meyer will also direct and maintain the ambulance service's national accreditation requirements.

Meyer is originally from Hillsboro, ND. He graduated from the F-M Ambulance Service paramedic program in 1993 and then from the University of Mary in 2000. Meyer has been North Dakota's State EMS Director since 2003. He has also worked at MeritCare Lifeflight, St. Mary's EMS (Detroit Lakes), F-M Ambulance, and served in U.S. Navy.

In his free time, Meyer enjoys aviation, golfing, and spending time with his family.



Lampe and Martin Attend Leadership Program

Dean Lampe and Don Martin recently participated in the Ambulance Service Management (ASM) course in Kansas City, Missouri from January 31st – February 6th. This was the first week of on-site training; education and group projects continue in an online learning environment until the second on-site week, which is April 17th – 23rd. F-M Ambulance tries to send 1 – 2 individuals to this training every year.

The ASM course is for aspiring, new and experienced managers who wish to develop their leadership competencies and sharpen essential management skills. The ASM program provides a broad foundational curriculum that matches cutting edge management theory with real-life practical applications. The core faculty includes experts in the art and science of EMS management, as well as distinguished guest faculty representing current leaders in emergency medical services management. The American Ambulance Association, the leading ambulance service advocacy organization across the United States, sponsors this program.

The Ambulance Service Manager program is a certification course designed to immerse participants in an engaging learning environment. A small group of 40 participants moves together through two weeks of face-to-face instruction and experiential learning led by industry leading faculty bridged by several weeks of online discussion and group project work. Along the way, lifelong relationships are formed and a professional network is established.



F-M Field Supervisor Returns from Iraq

Rick Cameron, a field supervisor for F-M Ambulance Service, just completed a year-long tour in Iraq. Rick was deployed in February 2009 and came back in February of 2010.

While Rick was gone, Deann Krupich assumed his responsibilities as field supervisor. Care packages were sent from employees at F-M Ambulance throughout his deployment.



Did You Know...

- You use 200 muscles to take one step.
- A full bladder is roughly the size of a softball.
- The acid in your stomach is strong enough to dissolve razor blades.
- It takes food about 7 seconds to get from your mouth to your stomach.
- The average dream lasts about 23 seconds.

EMS Rendezvous 2010

The North Dakota EMS Association will be holding the 36th Annual Spring Conference – EMS Rendezvous April 15th – 17th in Minot, ND.

This conference is designed for the EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate, EMT-Paramedic, RN's and LPN's, First Responders, Physicians, EMS Instructors and Coordinators, Law Enforcement Officers, Military Emergency Personnel, Fire/Rescue Personnel, EMS Dispatchers, and any other emergency personnel. The conference is approved for continuing education hours. For more information or to register please visit the ND EMS Association website.

Recertification Time Brings Out the Worst in Some

This year marked the 10th time I have recertified with the National Registry of EMTs. During that time frame I have never been audited by the NREMT (knock on wood); I have always had more than enough hours to qualify; and I have never been late in turning in my recertification paperwork. To me, it would be unthinkable to let my certification expire. But to many other EMTs and paramedics, recertifying is an inconvenience and an afterthought. Here's the proof:

The following are real excuses from EMTs that I've heard over the years. Excuses as to why they can't attend the refresher or find continuing education:

- I have to babysit my girlfriend's dog.
- I have to buy a four-wheeler that weekend.
- I have to go hunting (fishing and camping have also been used).
- My car probably won't make it to the refresher.
- I have to recertify?
- Do I really have to be there?
- Can't you just sign me off?
- I have to go snowmobiling.
- The Vikings are playing and I have tickets.

F-M Ambulance Service has conducted four separate refresher courses for First Responders and EMTs beginning in October; and yet I know that we will have people calling in late February and March asking for refresher courses.

On a related topic, continuing education hours are very easy to obtain. The Emergency Medical Education Center (EMEC) at F-M Ambulance Service offers on-line, traditional classroom and hybrid course options. EMTs are also allowed to audit – for credit – ACLS, PALS and Paramedic School. Classes are held nearly every day and on numerous weekends. Call Sherm at (701) 364-1750, to find out what options are available or check out the EMEC website at www.fmambulance.com/education.

Contributed by Sherm Syverson, Education Manager

Welcome!

Merigen Medical recently added a new employee, Sharee Femling. Sharee is a First Aid and Safety Specialist. Sharee will be working with businesses to help them achieve their first aid and safety goals. Sharee is an EMT-B for Felton Rescue as well as an American Heart Association Instructor. She also has previous experience in first aid sales.

TRFAA Receives Grant for “Heart to Heart” Program

As part of an ongoing effort to support community projects, Thief River Falls Area Ambulance (TRFAA) received a \$25,000 Flex Grant from the MN Department of Health, Office of Rural Health which will fund our “Heart to Heart” Program. As part of the project, we are striving to place Automatic External Defibrillation (AED) equipment that can be used by the lay public to provide immediate treatment of certain life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias. As with any significant cardiac event, time is of the essence to prevent further damage to the brain and heart muscle. The ORH Flex Grant will allow us to place a minimum of 14 AEDs in TRF and surrounding communities that we service. It is part of our mission at TRFAA to contribute to the community in order to make Thief River Falls a safer place for families to live and work.

Our goal of the “Heart to Heart” project is to improve the out-of-hospital survival rates for persons who experience a cardiac arrest. While our ambulance response times are within seven minutes to all parts of the city limits, there are extended response times within our geographical primary service area (PSA). The maximum response time (one-way) within our primary service area is 45 minutes. Thus, it is imperative that early defibrillation is accessible to the public in areas of delayed response.

In our primary service area, the delay for hospital treatment can be up to one hour, due to the extended transports to the closest medical facility as a result of the vast geography (1200 square miles) which we are licensed to cover. This response time is not always conducive when responding to treat a cardiac arrest. American Heart Association statistics show that biological death (when brain cells die) occurs within 4-6 minutes after breathing and the heart stops. The recommended treatment for a heart that is in fibrillation (electrical chaos), is the immediate defibrillation (shock) that is administered within seconds of collapse of the victim.

By implementing the “Heart to Heart” project, one of our objectives is to place an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) in area businesses, and other organizations, that accommodate high volumes of people on a regular basis. Target venues within the community and Pennington County are local businesses, industrial sites, schools, churches and places of recreation. As part of the grant process, we have interest and support from Lincoln High School, Thief River Falls Park and Recreation, Ralph Englestad Arena, Errico Tool and Manufacturing, and St. Bernard’s Church and School.

A second objective for the program is to promote community-wide CPR. In conjunction with placing the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), employees of the businesses and/or organizations would be instructed in Heartsaver CPR. The target class would be adult CPR for lay persons, with an option to include instruction for child CPR as needed. Rick Besser, Field Supervisor and Educator, will oversee the educational component of the grant. Instructors from Thief River Falls Area Ambulance staff would assist with teaching CPR. While the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is intended to be utilized by the untrained lay person, as a part of this project, we intend to familiarize the potential users of the device of its basic operation.

Quality service is of the utmost importance when dealing with patient care. Is it our goal as a public safety EMS provider to see that we offer and deliver excellent care to the citizens that count on us in times of emergencies, tragedy and disasters.

Contributed by Brett Rima, Operations Manager TRFAA



H1N1 Update

We have all heard and learned a lot about H1N1 this past fall and winter. F-M Ambulance in conjunction with Cass County Public Health has had six vaccination clinics for responders in Cass County. We gave approximately 175 vaccines to employees and volunteers from response agencies such as the Fargo Police Department, West Fargo Police Department, Fargo Fire Department, West Fargo Fire Department, Cass County Fire Departments, Cass County Rural EMS Responders and the Cass County Sheriff’s Department.

TEMS

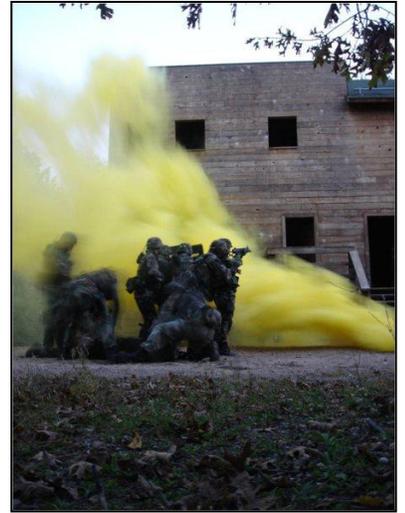
What is TEMS?

- TEMS stands for Tactical Emergency Medical Support. TEMS provides medical care for the police officers, suspects and bystanders whenever Red River Valley SWAT is deployed. The essential difference between everyday EMS and TEMS is in that everyday EMS, the delivery of medical care is the mission, whereas in TEMS, medicine is a tool to help achieve the overall tactical mission. In the words of Samuel L Jackson's character "Hondo" in the movie SWAT, "SWAT is a life saving organization."



How many paramedics are on the TEMS team?

- There are four medics from F-M Ambulance (Rick Cameron, Wes Dahl, Tom Dobrzynski, and David Reihe) and two from Meritcare Lifeflight. Our medical director is Dr. Scott Parks from Meritcare.



How much training do you need to be on the TEMS team?

- We all go through SWAT basic school where we learn tactics and marksmanship. Tactics involve searching for and securing suspects in a safe manner. The entire team trains four and a half hours a month on tactics. Medical scenarios are always included. We practice surgical airways and chest tube administration as part of Meritcare's Advanced Trauma Life Support classes. We also get specialized training on subjects like gunshot wounds and orthopedic injuries from Dr. Parks. We are trained at the operator level for hazmat response. Every fall the team travels to Camp Ripley MN for a week of training, and we also train during the year at the Regional Law Enforcement Training Center, local schools, college campuses, businesses, rural settings and buildings scheduled for demolition. Two of the TEMS members have attended the intensive two week course at the International School of Tactical Medicine in Palm Springs, California. ISTM is the premier tactical medic school in the world.



How closely do you work with law enforcement?

- We are right there with our tactical officers on all high risk operations. The advantage of having medics along with the team is that we are able to be at a downed officer's side rendering aid within seconds. The alternative would be to have an ambulance crew on standby a safe distance from the scene. If the ambulance was needed, the crew would have to wait until it was safe to approach the scene. This could take a very long time when seconds count – studies have shown that advanced life support arriving within 30 seconds can greatly increase the chance of survival for a person with a gunshot wound. We are also with the officers in training. Statistics show, and our own experience has confirmed, that the majority of injuries to SWAT officers occur in training. Having medics on the team reduces the liability of all agencies involved and gives the officers peace of mind which, of course, makes them more efficient. We also train the team on how to provide their own care for times that we can't get to them.

Do all SWAT teams have TEMS members?

- No. Surprisingly, some big city full time teams don't have medics. They rely on EMS staged at a safe distance. Some team's medics are doctors who are licensed peace officers. They function as SWAT officers and go into their medic role when the need arises.

How do you get selected to be on the TEMS team?

- Candidates are required to be experienced paramedics, pass a physical test and score well on the interview.

Why do you enjoy being on the team?

- We get to work with some very bright, dedicated law enforcement officers and paramedics. We've gotten to know team members from Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, and NDSU police departments and Cass and Clay County Sheriffs' Offices.
- Dave Reihe says, "I like the excitement and the feeling I get that I get when we work together to make a difference. Being a team member is great motivation to stay in shape. The hardest part about being on the team is probably the fact that the time commitment can interfere with my time with my family."
- "I really like being on the team because it gives me the opportunity to work more closely with the police departments in the area and to provide a service that I believe is very important. I like the extra training and learning more about traumatic injuries. The most difficult part for me about being on the team is the waiting. We hurry up and get out to the call and then spend a lot of time waiting." – Tom Dobrzynski

The Clinical Corner

By Kathy Lonski, Clinical Coordinator

F-M Ambulance recently purchased 5 Rad-57 monitors for our ambulances. The Rad-57 is a pulse oximeter that provides non-invasive blood carbon monoxide levels. This is a new tool for EMS providers since you could only obtain CO levels by blood tests done in a lab previously. For years, pre-hospital personnel had to rely on the story of how the patient got ill to suggest that the patient might have a carbon monoxide exposure. Home carbon monoxide detectors were not helpful because it only told us how much CO was in the air, not how much the patient might have absorbed.

The Rad-57 will allow us to protect firemen by monitoring their exposure to this silent killer. However, carbon monoxide poisoning does not just happen during fires or to firemen. Every winter as our home heaters go on, the incidence of carbon monoxide related sickness increases, sometimes to a deadly level. Studies have shown that even a single high level exposure, or prolonged exposure to low levels of CO, has the potential to cause long-term heart, brain and organ damage. Long-term effects of CO include cardiac arrests, Parkinson-like syndromes affecting motor skills and speech, dementia, cortical blindness, acute renal failure, and may have huge financial implications for patients and families. Oftentimes, however, the symptoms start as a nagging headache or flu-like symptoms that patients associate with seasonal illness. Now, we can routinely screen for carbon monoxide and help prevent damage.



Paramedic Program Update

NDSCS

- The F-M Ambulance Paramedic Program is undergoing a significant change. Our next group of students will be registering with North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) in Wahpeton rather than Bismarck State College. This change aligns us with a school that is geographically and philosophically closer to our program. F-M Ambulance will be able to use their campus assets in Wahpeton and in Fargo at the Skills and Technology Center. NDSCS is excited to work with us and is already working on shared advertising and recruiting efforts. Watch for our ads and press releases, and, as always, send potential students to our website for more information.



Job Fair

- F-M Ambulance hosted an EMS Job Fair on Saturday, February 13th. Services from all over North Dakota and Minnesota attended. For the second year in a row, EMSA from Oklahoma attended as well. Employers visited with students and practicing EMTs and paramedics about possible jobs at their services. Many job hunters brought resumes and started the application process while they were here. This event is held annually on the second Saturday in February.

Did You Know...



The Dakota Medical Foundation recently purchased 25 AED's from Merigen Medical.

These AED's will be placed through a rural grant program, with 15 of them going to first responder type groups (police, fire, quick response units, first responder groups, etc.) and 10 of them being placed in public locations in rural communities with a population of less than 15,000. After these units have been placed, a total of 507 AED's will have been placed by the Dakota Medical Foundation. Twenty-two people have been saved in our area with AED's from the DMF project.

CPR and First Aid Questions and Updates

Q: There are so many types of CPR – what is the difference between all of them?

A: F-M Ambulance Service teaches under the American Heart Association (AHA). The AHA has a few different kinds of CPR.

Heartsaver AED – this course is designed for the lay rescuer – someone that does not work in a healthcare setting. This course covers adult, infant and child CPR plus how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator). This course is \$35.00/person and certifies you for 2 years.

Healthcare Provider (Initial and Refresher) – this course is designed for people who work in a healthcare setting – a hospital, nursing home, dentist office, etc. This course covers adult, infant and child CPR (1-person and 2-person) and using the AED. The initial course costs \$50.00 and certifies you for 2 years. If you have a current card and need recertification, that course costs \$40.00 and certifies you for another two years. If your card has expired, you will need to take the initial course again.



Q: You have two different types of first aid – Basic First Aid and Pediatric First Aid – which one should I take?

A: **Basic First Aid** covers first aid for adults. This course is designed for anyone who would like to learn how to provide basic first aid or may have a duty to respond to emergencies. Topics covered include First Aid Basics, Medical Emergencies, Injury Emergencies and Environmental Emergencies. This course does not cover first aid for children.

Pediatric First Aid covers basic first aid for children. This course is designed for childcare workers and others who care for children and infants and have a duty to respond to emergencies. Pediatric first aid covers injuries and emergencies for children ages 0 – 18 years old.

Q: I've heard a lot about this new "hands-only CPR" – is this something you are teaching now, and do I need to get certified in it?

A: The American Heart Association has done a lot of research on CPR. The AHA normally comes out with new updates to CPR every 5 years (2010 is one of those years), but has released one of the newest updates a little earlier than the rest.

Early this year, the AHA has said that hands-only CPR — rapid, deep presses on the victim's chest until help arrives — works just as well as standard CPR for sudden cardiac arrest in adults. Hands-only CPR would probably be fine for those people that have a witnessed sudden collapse, since they most likely have some air in their lungs and blood. Compressions help keep that oxygen rich blood flowing to the brain, heart and other organs.

But wait... don't stop that breathing just yet. Hands-only CPR is talked about during CPR training at F-M Ambulance Service, but breathing is still taught during these courses. Hands-only CPR is not for everyone – children who collapse are more likely to have breathing problems, so breathing is especially important for them. That also applies to adults who suffer lack of oxygen from things such as near drowning or a drug overdose.

Experts hope that with hands-only CPR, bystanders will now be more willing to jump in and help if they see someone suddenly collapse. They hope the hands-only CPR is simpler and easier to remember, and takes the "yuck" factor out of CPR. As Scott Helmer, CPR coordinator at F-M Ambulance Service, says, "doing something is better than doing nothing".

The Rural Roundup

By Bob Klein, Liaison Coordinator

Greetings from Bob Klein, aka "Farmer Bob",

What's been going on in Cass and Clay counties? Well, this winter, when I am not out in your county teaching and training, I have been in your county snowmobiling. It has been a great winter for snowmobiling! It's also refresher time again, so we have been busy with refresher classes. As of this writing, we should have most of the refresher classes completed.

I would like to congratulate Felton Rescue for 30 years of service to the communities of Felton, Georgetown and surrounding areas. Felton Rescue was established in 1979. A picture of their first response vehicle, a Cadillac Stationwagon, still hangs in the Felton Community Hall. Luckily, Felton Rescue no longer uses the Cadillac – they currently have an ambulance which was purchased a few years ago from F-M Ambulance.

Dr. Sauter and I have been busy this winter training county EMTs on the use of the King Airway, which will replace the Combi-tube. The King Airway can be inserted blindly into a patient who has no gag reflex. It will help protect and stabilize the airway to ensure adequate ventilation.

An EMT-Basic refresher was held in McClusky, ND, February 19th – 21st (pictured). Eight EMT's from McClusky Ambulance attended the refresher. McClusky is 60 miles northwest of Bismarck, if you were wondering. Last summer, McClusky Ambulance built a new ambulance garage and training center, so this was the first chance I got to see it – what a beautiful facility! I want to thank McClusky for the fun yet busy weekend and for the great food!

The Buffalo Quick Response Unit and Buffalo Fire Department had their 27th annual pancake breakfast on Sunday February 21st from 7 AM – 12:30 PM. They had an impressive turnout and support from the community. They fed a grand total of 489 people. That is impressive support from the community – good job Buffalo QRU!

Well, I have to go for now, they tell me that I have a flood to prepare for. Have a safe and dry spring!

Farmer Bob



We hope that you have enjoyed this edition of "Vital Signs", a quarterly newsletter distributed by F-M Ambulance. If you would like to be on our mailing list for Vital Signs, or if you have any ideas, questions, or comments about "Vital Signs", please contact Kristi at (701) 364-1759, or kristi.engelstad@fmambulance.com.