

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK RECOGNIZES VIRGINIA'S DEVOTED PROVIDERS

May 17 - 23 is National EMS Week

(RICHMOND, Va.) - In the blink of an eye, you could be faced with a life-changing event that requires assistance from Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel. From the moment a call is received at the 911 center until the patient arrives at the hospital, first responders are ready to provide quality prehospital care. Last year, EMS providers responded to just over 1.3 million calls for help in Virginia, approximately 3,679 incidents per day.

National EMS Week, May 17 – 23, 2015, honors EMS responders' commitment to providing lifesaving services. EMS for Children Day, May 20, focuses on raising awareness of specialized care for pediatric patients.

"EMS providers regularly work on the front lines and respond to emergency situations 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said State Health Commissioner Marissa J. Levine, MD, MPH, FAAFP. "Please join me in recognizing the outstanding prehospital care that they provide in order to protect Virginians' health."

"This year's EMS Week theme is 'EMS Strong' and I couldn't think of a better way to describe our providers in Virginia," said Gary Brown, director of the Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS. "With nearly 35,000 providers and more than 650 agencies, we have one of the largest and most effective EMS systems in the country. Virginia is a leader in EMS, and this would not be possible without the strong leadership and dedication of our providers. We appreciate the countless hours devoted to continuing education, training and patient care, and we thank our local EMS providers during this special week."

Many EMS agencies across the state will host community activities, including first aid classes, health and safety fairs, open houses, fundraising dinners and more. These family-friendly events welcome everyone to come out and get to know the first responders in their neighborhoods.

To honor Virginia's fallen fire and EMS personnel, Fire and EMS Memorial Week will take place June 7 – 13, 2015. This event, in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs' Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service, honors fire and EMS responders who died in the line of duty and recognizes those who risk their lives daily to serve and protect Virginians. The Annual Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service will be held June 6 at noon at the Richmond International Raceway.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems.