

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK HONORS PROVIDERS' LIFESAVING EFFORTS
AND SERVICE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES**

May 21 - 27 is National EMS Week

(RICHMOND, Va.) – Emergencies happen when you least expect it. It may be something unthinkable that unfolds in front of you or a medical event that you experience. Emergencies can be scary, frantic and often a matter of life or death. During these times, you rely on medical professionals to respond quickly to your request for help and to provide lifesaving care to you or your loved one. Last year, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers responded to nearly 1.5 million calls for help in Virginia, approximately 4,063 incidents per day.

As proclaimed by Governor Terry McAuliffe, May 21 - 27, 2017, is EMS Week in Virginia. This special week honors EMS responders' commitment to providing a high level of prehospital care and services to the community. EMS for Children Day, May 24, focuses on the pediatric patient and the specialized care required when providing treatment for them.

“During EMS Week, we recognize the valuable contributions that our EMS providers make to provide immediate and lifesaving care to citizens in need,” said State Health Commissioner Marissa J. Levine, MD, MPH, FAAFP. “EMS providers are an important resource in the community because they are part of a system of care that protects the health of all Virginians. I thank them for their hard work and continued support of Virginia’s EMS system.”

“EMS providers are called upon to save lives on a daily basis and sometimes their heroic efforts may go unnoticed. EMS Week offers a chance for everyone to thank their local EMS providers for the countless hours of service they provide,” said Gary Brown, director of the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS. “Virginia is comprised of more than 34,500 EMS providers and 631 agencies that deliver emergency care in the Commonwealth. Many may not realize that 60 percent of EMS agencies are volunteer based. It’s one of several reasons why EMS providers are so exceptional and should be appreciated for their efforts, not just during this special week, but every day of the year.”

Many Virginia EMS agencies will host a variety of community activities, including first aid classes, health and safety fairs, open houses, fundraisers and more. These family-friendly events encourage citizens to meet and greet the first responders in their neighborhoods.

To honor Virginia’s fallen fire and EMS personnel, Fire and EMS Memorial Week will take place June 4 – 10, 2017. This event, in conjunction with the Virginia 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 3 at noon at the Richmond International Raceway.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS, visit www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/.

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