

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK RECOGNIZES THE DEDICATION AND  
COURAGE OF VIRGINIA'S EMS PROVIDERS**

*May 20 - 26 is National EMS Week*

(RICHMOND, Va.) – When you dial 911 for help you don't have time to think about what it takes to save a life, but you are comforted in knowing that medical providers will quickly respond to your emergency. These first responders are Virginia's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers and they are part of one of the greatest EMS systems in the nation. They are the heroes who train regularly to maintain their continuing education so that they can provide the best prehospital patient care, they work through holidays and long shifts, and they bravely dedicate their lives to saving others. Last year, EMS providers responded to more than 1.46 million calls for help in Virginia, approximately 4,000 incidents per day.

As proclaimed by Governor Ralph Northam, May 20 - 26, 2018, 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 23, focuses on the pediatric patient and the specialized care required when providing treatment for them.

"As health care changes, so does the EMS provider's role in delivering medical care and resources to improve the patient care experience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Acting State Health Commissioner Norman Oliver, MD, MA. "I am honored to work alongside these heroes who help bridge the gap and move us toward healthy, connected communities, and I thank them for dedicating their time to protecting the health of all people in Virginia."

"EMS Week is a great time to recognize the sacrifice that EMS providers make every day to save lives. They do it because they are the helpers during a harrowing experience and because it's their calling to make a difference in other people's lives," said Gary Brown, director of the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS. "It is my great privilege and honor to thank some of the best prehospital health care providers in our country, Virginia's EMS providers, comprised of 35,195 EMS providers and 600 agencies that deliver emergency care in the commonwealth."

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 firefighters and EMS personnel, the annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service will be held June 2 at noon at the Richmond International Raceway. Fire and EMS Memorial Week will take place the first week in June and recognizes fire and EMS responders who died in the line of duty and those who risk their lives daily to serve and protect Virginians.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/emergency-medical-services/).

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