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For More Information Contact
Beth Singer (804) 864-7635

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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK – A TIME TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS WHO GIVE MORE THAN JUST TIME

(RICHMOND, Va.)– A woman calls 911, she is frantic because her husband has collapsed and he is not breathing. An ambulance arrives within minutes. The Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and paramedic who provide life saving services are more than heroes, they are volunteers.

During National Volunteer Week, April 15-21 the Virginia Department of Health’s Office of EMS is recognizing volunteer Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers for the extraordinary service they provide to their communities.

More than 51 percent of all certified EMS providers in Virginia belong to volunteer EMS agencies. In a given year, a volunteer EMS provider can dedicate over 1,400 hours to training and responding to EMS calls in their community. This is in addition to working full-time jobs or attending school.

“It takes a special kind of person to provide the level of service and dedication exemplified by those who volunteer as EMS providers across the Commonwealth,” said Gary Brown, Director of the Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS. “Each and every one of them must be commended for their sacrifice and commitment.”

VDH would also like to acknowledge those who volunteer to respond to health and medical situations as part of the Virginia’s Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). These citizen volunteers are trained to respond to health and medical situations in support of established local public health. These volunteers assist locally in public health clinics, mass vaccinations and can be deployed to assist with disasters like Hurricane Katrina.

The National Volunteer Week theme, “Inspire by Example” truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help and to inspire others to serve. More people can inspire by example by volunteering at their local EMS agency or with Virginia’s MRC. All volunteer EMS agencies across the Commonwealth need members, and they need more than just providers; they also need people to help with functions like fundraising, building maintenance and more. Contact your local EMS agency to find out how you can help. To learn more about volunteering with the MRC visit www.vamrc.org.

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