



CONTACT:

Rick Steines, Fire Chief
563-589-4160
rsteines@cityofdubuque.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Dubuque Fire Department Receives American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Gold Award

DUBUQUE, Iowa – The Dubuque Fire Department has received a 2017 Mission: Lifeline® EMS Gold Award from the American Heart Association for implementing quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks.

Every year, more than 250,000 people experience an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), the deadliest type of heart attack caused by a blockage of blood flow to the heart that requires timely treatment. To prevent death, it's critical to restore blood flow as quickly as possible, either by mechanically opening the blocked vessel or by providing clot-busting medication.

Unfortunately, a significant number of STEMI patients don't receive this prompt reperfusion therapy, which is critical in restoring blood flow. Mission: Lifeline seeks to save lives by closing the gaps that separate these patients from timely access to appropriate treatments. Mission: Lifeline's EMS recognition program recognizes emergency medical services for their efforts in improving systems of care and improving the quality of life for these patients. Agencies that receive the Mission: Lifeline Gold award have demonstrated at least 75 percent compliance for each required achievement measure for two years.

The Dubuque Fire Department responds to almost 5,000 medical incidents each year. With 77 certified paramedics on staff, the department responds with at least one paramedic on every response vehicle, ensuring that advanced-level help arrives in the quickest possible time.

"The care our patients receive is our number one priority and the Dubuque Fire Department is dedicated to making our service among the best in the country," said Dubuque Fire Chief Rick Steines. "The American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline program is helping us accomplish that by implementing processes for improving our systems and practices. We are pleased that our paramedics have been recognized for their dedication and achievements in emergency medical care for all cardiac patients."

Emergency Medical System providers are vital to the success of Mission: Lifeline. EMS agencies perform 12-lead ECGs which measure the electrical activity of the heart and can help determine if a heart attack has occurred. They also follow protocols derived from American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology guidelines. These correct tools, training, and practices allow EMS providers to rapidly identify suspected heart attack patients, promptly notify the medical center, and trigger an early response from

the awaiting hospital personnel.

“EMTs and paramedics play a vital part in the system of care for those who have heart attacks,” said James Jollis, M.D., Chair of the Mission: Lifeline Advisory Working Group. “Since they often are the first medical point of contact, they can shave precious minutes of life-saving treatment time by activating the emergency response system that alerts hospitals. We applaud the Dubuque Fire Department for achieving this award that shows it meets evidence-based guidelines in the treatment of people who have severe heart attacks.”

The Dubuque Fire Department has proudly provided emergency and non-emergency ambulance service in the Dubuque community since 1914. For more information on Dubuque Fire Department EMS, visit www.cityofdubuque.org/fire or call 563-589-4160.

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About Mission: Lifeline

The American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline® program helps hospitals and emergency medical services develop systems of care that follow proven standards and procedures for acute coronary syndrome patients. The program works by mobilizing teams across the continuum of care to implement American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology clinical treatment guidelines. For more information, visit www.heart.org.