



News Release

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Charleston County EMS receives American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline EMS Recognition Award

Charleston County EMS received the American Heart Association's (AHA) Mission: Lifeline[®] EMS Gold Award for implementing quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks. The gold level is the highest awarded by AHA.

Every year, more than 250,000 people experience a specific type of heart attack called a STEMI, caused by a complete 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 surgically opening the blocked vessel or by giving clot-busting medication.

Unfortunately, a significant number don't receive prompt [reperfusion therapy](#), which is critical in restoring blood flow. Mission: Lifeline seeks to save lives by closing the gaps that separate STEMI patients from timely access to appropriate treatments. Mission: Lifeline's EMS program recognizes those emergency responders for their efforts in improving STEMI systems of care and improving the quality of life for these patients.

Charleston County EMS, along with the primary cardiac care centers in the County, utilize a trained staff and well equipped systems to allow providers to rapidly identify the STEMI, promptly notify the medical center and trigger an early response from the awaiting hospital personnel.

Agencies that receive the Mission: Lifeline Gold award have demonstrated at least 75 percent compliance for each required achievement measure for two years and treated at least eight STEMI patients for each year. Charleston County achieved 85%.

"EMT's and paramedics play a vital part in the system of care for those who have heart attacks," said Nancy Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the American Heart Association/ American Stroke Association. "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 Charleston County EMS for achieving this award that shows it meets evidence-based guidelines in the treatment of people who have severe heart attacks."

"Charleston County EMS is dedicated to always putting the patient first and having us among the best in the country as a Gold level care provider only confirms the hard work our medical staff does on a daily basis in improving the quality of care for all STEMI patients," said EMS Chief Don Lundy. "We are pleased to be recognized for our dedication and achievements in emergency medical care for STEMI patients."

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