



BIKERS TO THE RESCUE

Some 125 motorcyclists, named the Rescue Riders, are now members of the Kane County (Ill.) Medical Reserve Corps volunteers. The Riders are trained in first aid, CPR, basic triage and initial scene management.

Rescue Riders grew from Bikers for Bikers, a group that holds fundraisers for fallen riders. About three years ago, county officials suggested to the group's organizer, Dean Akey, that the motorcycle riders could assist during emergencies. The original idea was for them to transport EMS personnel and supplies to areas a motorcycle could reach faster than an ambulance or rescue vehicle. Then someone thought, *If the bikers are going to be there, why not use the people as well as their bikes?* So the group received EMS training and now carries medical supplies.

"We put people on the road with a skill set," Akey says. The Rescue Riders have "a little bit easier [of a] time getting into and out of an area," and he says, they can also keep things under control until the professionals arrive.

In addition to being available to county residents during disasters and emergencies, Rescue Riders go on long weekend motorcycle rides to provide help if there are any crashes.

Akey is excited that the program may go national. The fraternal organization Moose International, Loyal Order of the Moose, will likely take over management of Rescue Riders and is conducting a pilot program in conjunction with its motorcyclist group—Illinois Moose Riders. This affiliation with Moose Riders will give Rescue Riders access to close to about 2,000 Moose lodges across the country,

which could serve as bases of operation during emergencies.

JEMS gives a big Thumbs Up to the Rescue Riders for their commitment to community safety; to Dean Akey for his efforts in organizing, sustaining and expanding the volunteer group; and to Kane County Medical Reserve Corps for recognizing the potential of the band of bikers.



AMBULANCE SAFETY IS HER MISSION

While practicing as an emergency physician at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore several years ago, Australian Nadine Levick, MD, initiated crash tests of ambulances. It resulted in horrifying videos of crash dummies in patient compartments being destroyed during relatively low-speed crashes. Since then, she has worked to bring attention to the issue and make ambulances safer for patients and providers.

To further that mission, Levick launched a new organization—the EMS Safety Foundation (ESF)—Dec. 11 with a kick-off "Webinar," virtually attended by 40 EMS leaders, federal and state officials, safety experts and others. She describes ESF as a non-profit, multi-disciplinary "think tank and test bed," designed to improve the safety of ambulances, EMS transports and patient handling.

"Ambulances are generally not built by the automotive industry, [and] transportation-safety engineering and transport-systems engineering aren't generally integrated into EMS systems," Levick says. "This is a way to bridge the silos, to bring the expertise from engineering, system design, automotive and ergonomic design together with experts from the EMS community [and] to translate the knowledge we have into practice."

We join Levick in encouraging everyone in the EMS community to visit EMSSafetyFoundation.org and get involved. After all, the life you save could be your own!



FLU SHOTS ADMINISTERED AT HOME

The people who need flu shots the most can't always get to a doctor's office or clinic to get one, so last October Tri-State Ambulance in La Crosse, Wis., started sending paramedics out to inoculate people in their homes. Tri-State is a subsidiary of Gunderson Lutheran Health System, which trained the paramedics to administer the flu vaccine.

Residents make an appointment for a two-hour window because paramedics visit homes between ambulance calls to give the inoculations. Tri-State charges \$20 for each shot, submitting a bill to a patient's insurance company when appropriate.

According to Tri-State Director Matt Zavadsky, MS-HSA, the program has been "hugely successful." It even prompted an HMO in Oregon to arrange for Tri-State to conduct a flu-shot clinic at a large auto dealership in La Crosse. "They found us through a Google search for 'flu shots' and 'mobile,'" he says.

Zavadsky sees the flu-shot program as Tri-State's "first foray into our community health program, which will offer in-home services to frequent 9-1-1 callers to prevent them from needing to call 9-1-1." He envisions Tri-State paramedics visiting patient homes to administer medications (or to ensure patients take their meds), use 12-lead ECGs to monitor cardiac patients and ensure at-risk patients' homes are free from fall hazards. "Cool stuff!" he says. And we agree.

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