



Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety – EMS Division Receives American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline EMS Recognition Award

Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety – EMS Division has received the American Heart Association’s **Mission: Lifeline**® EMS Gold Award for implementing quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks. 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.

What does it mean to receive the AHA Mission: Lifeline EMS Gold Award?

- Every year, more than 250,000 people experience a STEMI, or ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction, a type of heart attack caused by a complete blockage of blood flow to the heart that requires timely treatment. 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** recognition program recognizes those emergency responders for their efforts in improving STEMI systems of care and improving the quality of life for these patients.

Emergency Medical System providers are vital to the success of **Mission: Lifeline**. The correct tools and training allow EMS 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.

“EMTs 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 Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety – EMS Division for achieving this award that shows it meets evidence-based guidelines in the treatment of people who have severe heart attacks.”

The American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest, largest voluntary organization devoted to fighting cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Founded by six cardiologists in 1924, the organization now includes more than 22.5 million volunteers and supporters working tirelessly to eliminate these diseases. The organization funds innovative research, fights for stronger public health policies and provides lifesaving tools and information to save and improve lives. The nationwide organization includes 144 local offices and nearly 2,700 employees. The American Heart Association’s mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. For more information, visit www.heart.org

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