

CHECK OUT
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Congratulations to Pinellas County's 2012 EMT, Paramedic & Dispatcher of the Year!



Pinellas County Commissioners named the 2012 Emergency Medical Services Professionals of the Year during their regular meeting on Tuesday, May 8th. The awards are given each year in May in honor of EMS Week, locally commemorating the EMS professionals working for Pinellas County's emergency medical services system.

This year's Paramedic of the Year is Sunstar Paramedic Nicholas Christiani. Christiani has worked for Sunstar since 2006, and as a Sunstar preceptor for the last two years. Nick was nominated for the role he played in saving the life of a 74-year-old stroke patient last May. Within eight minutes of the initial 9-1-1 call for help, a "Brain Attack Notification" was declared. Between Nicholas, his partner, and the crew from Engine 17, the patient received all appropriate care as per the Pinellas County Medical Operations Manual. Nicholas transported the patient emergency, in a position of comfort, to the Palms of Pasadena Emergency Room. The emergency room physician and staff quickly verified the accuracy of the pre-hospital assessment and began to treat the patient for an ischemic stroke.

Paramedic/Emergency Medical Dispatcher Eric Fayad was named Emergency Medical Dispatcher of the Year, a new category for this year's EMS Week awards. Fayad started his career with EMS in 1999 as an EMT and became a paramedic in 2001. In addition to Eric's many roles and responsibilities at Sunstar, he has also been a role model for the Sunstar Communications Center in his performance as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher Florida 9-1-1 Public Safety Telecommunicator, and as a CTO. In 2011, Eric's overall EMD score was 99.57% with an average customer service score of 99.5%.

George Farrell was named Emergency Medical Technician of the Year. Farrell is a 30-year firefighter/EMT with Lealman Fire Rescue. George also works part-time at Sunstar Paramedics, is preceptor with St. Petersburg College and volunteers his time as an auxiliary member of the Florida Highway Patrol.



THE IMPACT OF ONE PATIENT'S APPRECIATION



Paramedic Craig Poling, meets Mr. Dello Iacono and his wife for the first time since his cardiac arrest at Starkey Road Baptist Church in 2011.

Many patients and families don't hesitate to commend the EMS crew who helped save their lives, provide treatment or offer reassurance. In 2011 alone, Sunstar received 224 cards, emails and phone calls, thanking the employees who responded to their call for help. However, it isn't often that the patient gets to meet the Paramedics and EMTs who helped them after a 9-1-1 call was made. Sunstar is trying to change that.

For the 3rd year in a row, Sunstar Paramedics is inviting patients to meet their Sunstar crew and tell their stories in front of a camera. The video, shown to all Sunstar employees at the end of the year, is compiled of patient interviews and on-the-job photographs. The video is a way for all employees to understand the appreciation patients have for their efforts, even if they never hear it. When Mr. Dello Iacono came to Sunstar to meet the paramedic who helped resuscitate him, he hugged him for a long time. "I appreciate Craig's work that day when he saved my life, but he is part of a team. All of the Sunstar employees should be commended for being in this profession. You give people like me a second chance at life and, for that, I am forever grateful".

SUNSTAR CRITICAL CARE NURSE WINS FLORIDA EMS NURSE OF THE YEAR

Henry "Hank" Geiter, Sunstar Critical Care Nurse, was awarded Florida EMS Nurse of the Year for 2012. Mr. Geiter has been working with the Sunstar Paramedics Critical Care Transport Team since 2002. Prior to that, he spent many years working as a Critical Care nurse in various hospital systems. Hank brings a wealth of knowledge to the pre-hospital environment. He has authored a multitude of published articles for both nursing and EMS personnel as well as serving as a content reviewer for a variety of books. He hosts his own website, which offers complimentary CEU such as, "Transporting the Patient with the Temporary Pacemaker," "Cardiac Markers," and "Difficult Airway Management."

Hank has authored a book, E-Z ECG, which won the 2007 AJN Book of the Year Award for critical care and emergency nurses. He has also developed a series of "Cheat Sheet" cards covering basic ECG, 12-Lead, MI, ABG, PA catheters and Intra-Aortic Balloon Pump which provide quick references for healthcare providers. Hank has delivered lectures to audiences including the AACN National Teaching Institute, All Children's Hospital Neonatal/Pediatric Transport Conference, Med-Ed Seminar, and Sunstar Critical Care Conference. Hank was also the core educator for the first annual Sunstar Paramedics Critical Care Transport Paramedic Course offered last summer. He is an active member with the American Association of Critical Care Nurses and American MENSEA. He has participated in various committees to enhance educational offerings such as AACN Exam Development, AACN NTI Abstract Review, and AACN Continuing Education Review. Hank also serves as the primary educational content developer for the Sunstar Critical Care Transport Team.

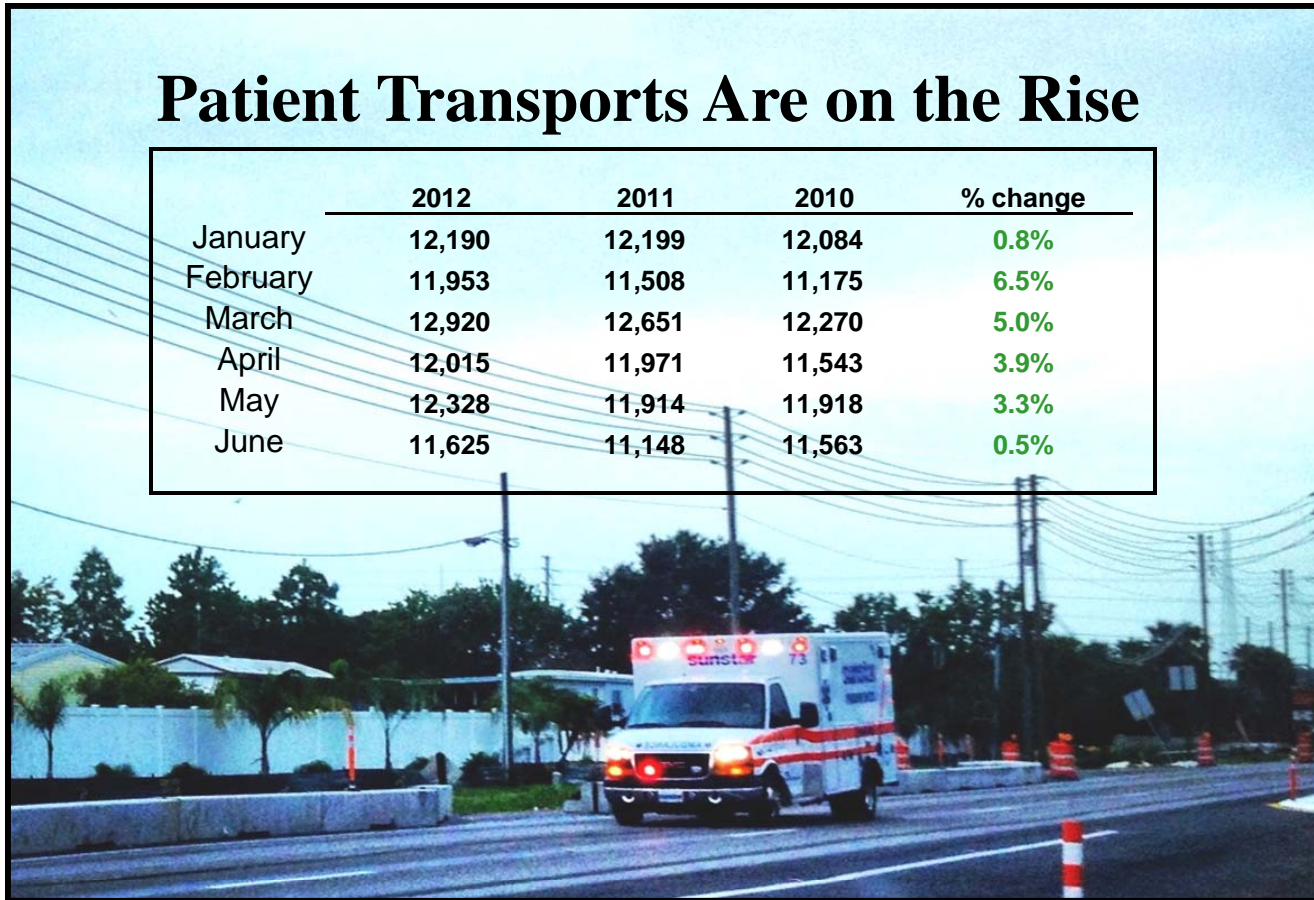
Hank won this award for his unyielding commitment to the clinical and professional development of others. It is one thing to stand in front of a group and talk about a topic, but it something completely different have that group be interactive, have fun, and leave feeling like they really learned something. The Critical Care Transport environment is unique. It combines both the pre-hospital realm with the inpatient environment. CCT nurses and paramedics are required to be knowledgeable and proficient in both. Hank has been instrumental in bringing together the important aspects of both and providing a solid platform for the Critical Care Transport Teams.

Congratulations Hank Geiter for winning such an excellent award for EMS nursing!



Patient Transports Are on the Rise

	2012	2011	2010	% change
January	12,190	12,199	12,084	0.8%
February	11,953	11,508	11,175	6.5%
March	12,920	12,651	12,270	5.0%
April	12,015	11,971	11,543	3.9%
May	12,328	11,914	11,918	3.3%
June	11,625	11,148	11,563	0.5%



A SURVIVOR'S "THANK YOU"



Dawn Pelletier left her home in Venice before the sun was up, to travel to the Madeira Beach Triathlon on May 18th. The full time teacher enjoys triathlons and participates in them often for the exercise, hardly ever staying long enough to see her final time or receive medals. This particular race was routine for Dawn and she was excited when she completed it without issue. After finishing the run portion and passing the finish line, Dawn thought she would cool off in the Gulf waters. When her racing heart still didn't slow down after several minutes of rest, Dawn found EMT Jeff Banks and Paramedic Megan Hollern on the beach in a medical Kubota. She asked if she could sit with them for a short time until she caught her breath. After several minutes with no relief, Jeff and Megan began to get concerned. They monitored her vitals and then convinced Dawn to let them take her up to the road so a proper assessment of her heart rhythm could be done in the ambulance.

Upon her arrival to the ambulance, the paramedics placed her on the Lifepak heart monitor and found that she was in severe V-tach (Ventricular Tachycardia) with a pulse and a dangerously low blood pressure. Ventricular tachycardia is a fast heart arrhythmia that starts in the lower chambers (ventricles) and very often can lead to cardiac arrest if not treated immediately.

Michael Gonzalez and John Hanshew, the crew on stand-by that day at the ambulance, immediately cardioverted Mrs. Pelletier into normal sinus rhythm. She instantaneously felt relief. She was transported to Morton Plant Hospital for a cardiac evaluation and had a defibrillator surgically implanted a few days after her arrival.

Dawn Pelletier won Overall Grand Masters Female placement for her age group at the Madeira Beach Triathlon that morning. However, that award didn't mean much to her. According to Dawn, she won a second opportunity at life which beats any trophy she could ever receive. Dawn visited Sunstar Paramedics on July 10th to meet the employees who saved her life and say thank you for their courageous efforts that Saturday morning. She looks forward to retiring in two more years and traveling the country with her husband.

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Our Mission is "to provide compassionate quality care and service to our community."

Know someone who would enjoy this quarterly newsletter? E-mail Ksterling@sunstarems.com

Community Newsletter

TO:



From the C.O.O.



Mark Postma,
Chief Operating Officer

In the past few months, we have gone through all of our reaccreditations here at Sunstar Paramedics. We passed all of them, which continues to show the commitment to quality within our organization. I want to thank our employees for their hard work in continuing to strive for excellence!

I would like to address some issues brought up in recent news articles and blogs regarding our reimbursement from Pinellas County for the services we provide. Communications by outside sources to the media and the Board of County Commission suggest we continue to have more reimbursements than we are owed. The truth is that our contract reimburses us for all trips that transport a patient. With this, we agreed to reduce our funding by \$2 million each year for the next 3 years (\$6 million total savings to the County).

So how does our reimbursement grow? Our annual number of calls has gone up significantly, which will offset some of the \$2 million reduction. Keep in mind Pinellas County bills and collects the fees for the increased transports, so there is revenue to cover the expense.

Outside sources have somehow continued to portray us as misleading people. This is simply not true. Due to the high call volume, we have had to staff more ambulances with less dollars. However, according to patient and customer surveys, we continue to provide outstanding service. ALL of our employees received only a 1% pay raise to help control costs. Other cost saving measures, such as our north county and south county sub-stations (Hubs), are helping us reduce mileage on the fleet. Our group purchasing and efficient staffing also provides savings.

The increase in ambulance volume actually helps the county fund more of the EMS system, due to the offsetting cost of their reimbursement versus our cost to them.

As one local public official noted in an analysis of our operation, "Sunstar is a hyper-efficient" organization. We will continue to maximize efficiencies in order to reduce costs. Keep in mind that ambulance services are supported by user fees and not property taxes.

For more information, do not hesitate to contact me at mpostma@sunstarems.com