



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National EMS Week:

A Time of Gratitude for the Essential Service of Paramedics and EMTs

Clinton, Miss. — **National EMS Week is May 17-23, 2020.** This designated week, established by presidential proclamation in 1973, is an annual celebration to recognize and appreciate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provided by Paramedics and EMTs in communities across our nation.

This year's National EMS Week presents a timely opportunity for communities to give special thanks and gratitude to all EMS practitioners who have been and continue to serve on the front lines of our nation's war on the COVID-19 pandemic. EMS practitioners are responding to calls for help from patients with suspected or positively diagnosed coronavirus, in addition to 9-1-1 calls for patients with severe injuries and illness, such as cardiac arrests and strokes. In serving their patients, thousands of EMS practitioners have contracted COVID-19 and even more have had to self-quarantine away from their families after having been exposed to the coronavirus. Many of our brave Paramedics and EMTs have died in the line of duty from COVID-19.

EMS is a vital element of our nation's health care, public health, and public safety systems. Every day, 24/7, in every community, EMS responds to patient calls for help when they have had an accident or are experiencing a medical emergency, including heart attack, difficulty breathing, a fall, drowning, stroke, drug overdose or acute illness. As strongly demonstrated during this pandemic, EMS is an integral component of our nation's ability to respond to public health crises. EMS is a critical element of our nation's disaster and mass casualty response. Together with their colleagues in the fire service and law enforcement, EMS practitioners respond to disasters and mass casualties, including bombings, mass shootings, biological and natural disasters, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods.

EMS also serves as a health care safety net by providing emergent, urgent and preventive medical care as the first step of the health care continuum. EMS fills health care gaps in communities with cost-effective, 24/7 medical care that assesses and navigates patients to the right care, in the right place, and at the right time.

"As the coronavirus pandemic unfolds, our country and the world are bearing witness to the remarkable dedication, commitment to service and courage of EMS practitioners. Communities owe a great debt of gratitude to our Paramedic and EMTs who are serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 response. Please help us recognize the incredible courage and selflessness of our EMS practitioners," stated Matt Zavadsky, President of NAEMT.

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All communities are asked to recognize the heroic efforts of their Paramedics and EMTs this EMS Week and to support their local EMS agencies throughout the year. Communities are encouraged to post their messages of thanks online with **#EMSStrong**.

On Saturday, May 16 at 6 p.m. EST, please join the National EMS Memorial Service in a national moment of silence to honor all Paramedics and EMTs who died in the line of duty in 2019 and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Post your message of remembrance using **#moment2honor** and **#ultimatesacrifice**.

About NAEMT

Formed in 1975 and more than 75,000 members strong, the [National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians \(NAEMT\)](#) is the nation's only organization that represents and serves the professional interests of all EMS practitioners, including paramedics, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders, and other professionals providing prehospital and out-of-hospital emergent, urgent or preventive medical care. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

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