



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2022

2022 National EMS Awards of Excellence Recipients Announced

Clinton, Miss. – NAEMT and EMS World are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2022 *National EMS Awards of Excellence*. The awards will be presented during NAEMT's General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, October 11, and at the Opening Ceremony of EMS World Expo on Wednesday, October 12 in Orlando, Florida. We congratulate the following recipients and recognize their outstanding contributions to the EMS profession and the patients they serve:

John Ehrhart, Paramedic/Flight Medic, San Diego, California
2022 NAEMT/Prodigy Paramedic of the Year Award

Eldon Headrick, Norwich EMS, Norwich, Kansas
2022 NAEMT/Demers-Braun-Crestline-Medix EMT of the Year Award

Dan Talbert, MHS, EMT-P, FPC, Educator, St. Augustine, Florida
2022 NAEMT/Jones & Bartlett Learning Public Safety Group EMS Educator of the Year Award

TSGT Jack Williams, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska
2022 NAEMT/North American Rescue Military Medic of the Year Award

**Dan Godbee, MD, FACEP, NREMT-P, TP-C, FP-C, CCP-C, Medical Director, Zachary, Louisiana;
COL, Alabama Army National Guard**
2022 NAEMT/Bound Tree EMS Medical Director of the Year Award

Mark X. Cicero, MD, FAAP, Cromwell, Connecticut
2022 NAEMT-AAP/Handtevy Pediatric EMS Award

Delaware County EMS, Delaware, Ohio
2022 Dick Ferneau Career EMS Service of the Year Award
2022 NAEMT-ACEP/Technimount EMS Safety in EMS Award

Utah Navajo Health System EMS, Montezuma Creek, Utah
2022 EMS World Volunteer EMS Service of the Year Award

Lainey Volk, San Juan Island EMS, Friday Harbor, Washington
2022 EMS World/Dynarex EMS Caring Award

Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida
2022 EMS World/FirstNet®, Built with AT&T Wellness and Resilience Award

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John Ehrhart, EMT-P, “stands head and shoulders above all others in depth and breadth of passion, initiative, thought leadership, and influence in EMS,” says nominator and colleague, Aaron J. Byzak, MBA, FACHE. Ehrhart delivers advanced practice skills, treatments, and knowledge to patients. His clinical accomplishments, clinical excellence, and multi-disciplinary teamwork enhance the initiatives he leads. Ehrhart is Co-Founder and Director of the California Paramedic Foundation and a Flight Medic for Air Methods (Mercy Air). He was instrumental in the recent expansion of EMS-to-Hospital information exchange (SAFR model) in parts of California. He leads the Nicholas Rosecrans Award in partnership with organizations which nationally promote EMS injury and illness programs. Ehrhart also leads the California Opioid Prevention by EMS (COPE), a project dedicated to expanding EMS programs to help reduce opioid addiction, overdose, and death. Volunteering while working as a full-time flight medic, Ehrhart “has made sacrifices to the EMS profession for which he should be recognized,” notes Byzak.

Eldon Headrick’s spirit of volunteerism shines through his dedication and willingness to serve. He reliably meets the challenging needs of Norwich EMS and actively seeks out training opportunities to learn new skills and concepts. His willingness to serve extends beyond call time and he takes it upon himself to ensure EMS vehicles are always ready. He doesn’t take short cuts and ensures each patient receives the appropriate care. Beyond providing quality prehospital care, Headrick is an advocate for community education, including Stop the Bleed and CPR training. To further support EMS, he became a local government councilman. He is a great example of what it means to be a member of the community at large, and the community of EMS practitioners. “This nomination is made for a Kansas EMT who has significantly contributed to EMS at the community, state and/or national level,” says Kari Presley, Chief Operations Officer of the Kansas EMS Association (KEMSA).

Dan Talbert, MHS, EMT-P, FPC, director of EMS & Fire Programs at the First Coast Technical College (FCTC) Public Safety Campus, demonstrates a true passion for educating the next generation of EMTs and Paramedics. He has implemented many new programs at FCTC with an emphasis on use of simulations, which have been successful and noted by his students. Sharing years of professional experience in the prehospital setting, he’s able to help students perform at a higher level and adapts his training approach for each class. He engages students by immersing them in realistic scenarios and challenging situations to prepare them for their future careers. He places an emphasis on professionalism and respect during interactions with patients, fellow classmates, and instructors. Talbert fosters a culture where students feel like they are part of the future in EMS. He is a mentor to students and conducts mock interviews and practices with students to develop their “people” skills.

TSGT Jack Williams is an Independent Duty Medical Technician serving as an Education and Training Specialist with the 673d Medical Group at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. With a personal commitment to excellence, he is responsible for training 1,700 military medics, nurses, and other prehospital providers on advance medical skills. Drawing from his tactical experience and expertise, he inspires the same passion for education in next generation and career Airmen alike. Serving in the Air Force for 17 years, TSGT Williams has deployed six times, including two combat tours to Afghanistan, serving as the sole medical provider. He directly cared for more than 150 patients in care-under-fire events and mass casualty situations. His critical thinking, rapid field assessments, and combat training enabled him to perform several surgical airways and needle decompressions, and numerous tourniquet applications to patients with multisystem traumas. He also taught a Combat Lifesaver Class to students in the Afghan National Police, Afghan National Army, and National Directorate of Security. For his distinguished service as both a combat medic and medical project manager, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Air Force Combat Action Medal, and the Army Combat Medical Badge. TSGT Williams has helped to expand and promote Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) in both Alaska and Germany. He was also key in the advancement of the Below Zero Medicine concept, and development of the course curriculum in support of the National Defense Strategy.

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COL Dan Godbee, MD, Medical Director for East Baton Rouge Parish EMS, has tirelessly served his country and community for 44 years. MAJ Nicholas Studer, MD, MPH, NRP, MC, FS, DMO, US Army, Medical Director, Army EMS Program Office, notes Dr. Godbee is viewed as an affable “everyman,” while simultaneously a consummate scholar and the Medical Editor of a major medical journal for prehospital medicine. He began as an Eagle Scout, enlisted as a Private and rose to the rank of Sergeant Major. He then accepted a Commission as a physician and again worked his way up to the rank of Colonel. He is a Green Beret with numerous deployments as both a physician and a warfighter. Dr. Godbee is never far from the frontline, yet comfortable briefing General Officers in the Army or elected officials and journalists in his hometown. He dives, parachute jumps, and performs every other adventurous task with his soldiers in the Army and his law enforcement, fire, and EMS crews in civilian life. “It has been my honor to know Dr. Godbee since I was a medical student. I could count on his sage advice during both personal setbacks and successes, and I credit his mentorship with where I am today,” states MAJ Studer.

Mark Cicero, MD, is an associate professor in the section of pediatric emergency medicine at the Yale School of Medicine and an attending physician at the Yale-New Haven’s Children’s Hospital Emergency Department. He is passionate and dedicated to improving prehospital pediatric care in Connecticut and is “a model for colleagues nationwide,” states Megan Petrucelli, MSN, RN, EMS-I, CEN, and Michael P. Goldman, MD. Dr. Cicero continues to ensure that EMS agencies in Connecticut are best prepared to manage the next pediatric emergency, in addition to working for the same at the national level. He is a leader in pediatric emergency medicine and has dedicated his career to improving the prehospital care of children with a focus on disaster preparedness. He has been involved with CT EMS for Children since 2008 and has served as the Co-Medical Director since 2015. He is a member of the EMS for Children Innovation and Improvement Center’s Disaster Preparedness Working Group and was honored as a 2022 Inaugural Member of the National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters. In addition to his work on disaster management, he has been instrumental in the development of Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinators within EMS agencies. Dr. Cicero uses his educational talents to train EMS teams and his expertise to advocate at the state level.

Career EMS Service Award / Delaware County EMS (DCEMS) is a third-service EMS agency that services Delaware County, north of Columbus, Ohio, one of the 10 fastest-growing counties in the country. The service’s 140 employees cover 6,500 calls for service per year with a \$14 million operating budget. “We are proud that our providers are focused on delivering quality medical care and a high-quality experience to their patients in their time of need,” says Jeff Fishel, director of EMS for DCEMS. DCEMS is led by Medical Director Ashish Panchal, MD, PhD, who recently increased his time dedicated to the agency by 300%. DCEMS utilizes a call service that on-duty field providers can use while attending to patients in unique circumstances. Recognizing the value of evidence-based practice, DCEMS hired full-time quality improvement and education coordinators in 2019. A training captain oversees an in-house simulation lab that has garnered national attention. All employees are put through the simulation lab quarterly and CE is offered. A Shift Clinical Educator program led by clinical captains provides hands-on and in-station training with clear objectives. DCEMS secured funding and purchased Stop the Bleed wall kits for every public school building in Delaware County and offers training to teachers and staff. DCEMS offers a citizens’ academy once per year to residents of the county that teaches components of prehospital medical care. DCEMS partnered with the Delaware County Sheriff’s Office (DCSO) to help patients who suffer from substance abuse disorder and/or who have mental health issues. DCEMS helped found a grassroots initiative to locally source and supply more than \$30,000 worth of donated PPE to EMS and healthcare entities across Ohio. In 2020 Delaware County EMS was named Ohio EMS Provider of the Year. “With more than 1,200 EMS agencies in Ohio, this award was humbling, yet served as recognition of the hard work and dedication put forth by members of DCEMS,” says Fishel.

Safety in EMS Award / Delaware County EMS (DCEMS) is focused on the safety of its providers and its patients. Empowering their providers to ensure safety through change includes participation in safety and truck committees and ambulance redesign with a safety focus. With provider well-being emphasized, new

programs implemented include ballistic vests, rechargeable fire extinguishers and mounts, guidelines for PPE use, safe patient moving devices, and oxygen lifting systems. Among the new programs for ambulances, is a redesign for secured objects inside the patient compartment and positioning patient care items so that providers can access them while remaining secured in their safety harnesses. These critical changes were driven by the employees who are on the front lines of patient care. DCEMS is also invested in providing for the physical and mental well-being of its providers through an exercise program, access to healthy and fit cookbooks, peer support, a therapy dog program, and a fit responder program.

Utah Navajo Health System (UNHS) EMS started in 2013 and today operates with a volunteer staff of 32. Seven of the original crew are still running today, 17 have been with the agency for at least five years, and the longest-tenured member is an EMT who has been active for 29 years. Defining a true “frontier” service, UNHS EMS services the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation, covering 5,000 residents spread out over an approximate 1,400 square mile run range that can increase to 1,800 square miles when assisting as mutual aid. The average scene-to-hospital is a 43-mile transport including runs that go from Utah to New Mexico or Arizona. The crew is 99% Navajo. Only state roads are paved in this area, explains Susan Hendy, AEMT, so the service’s six ambulances, five rapid response vehicles, and two UTVs have to traverse rough and rocky terrain to reach patients in need. Police support is typically an hour away, and air support is an average 45-minute wait time. Locating a call scene can be a challenge—many homes don’t have addresses, some don’t have electricity, dispatchers often confront language barriers with Navajo-speaking callers, and the Navajo Nation’s road markings conflict with the county’s road system. Yet, despite the remote backcountry, cultural concerns and limited staff and resources, UNHS EMS is at the forefront of clinical care, education and community outreach. “Our team includes certified instructors for EMT and AEMT courses,” says Hendy. “We also have certified instructors for BLS, ACLS, PALS, PEPP, Stop the Bleed, Car Seat Technicians, and Incident Command courses.” EMS instructors conduct courses for local clinic nurses and providers as well as several community courses a year. Community service is another top priority. UNHS EMS presents at summer youth programs and participates in annual community health, women’s wellness, and children’s teddy bear clinics. The agency collaborates with a local victims’ advocate team on domestic violence calls and has team members who volunteer with Utah’s Critical Incident Stress Management team to help with debriefings throughout Utah. EMTs assist with COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics. One of the crew was recently named AEMT of the year for the state of Utah. “We continue to educate and lead the community in emergency management,” Hendy says. “We are dedicated to serving others, improving and saving lives, and offering opportunities for growth within the community and our agency.”

Lainey Volk is director of outreach and education, AHA Training Center Coordinator, and EMT with San Juan Island EMS, a county 9-1-1 service serving towns and outer islands in the scenic and rugged northwest corner of Washington State. Volk has served with San Juan Island EMS for 32 years and maintains Washington State credentials as an EMT, EMS evaluator, community healthcare worker, AHA BLS Training Center Faculty, Car Seat Technician, WFA/WFR/WEMT Instructor, and Safe Sitter Instructor. “She has trained thousands of health care professionals and community members,” says her nominator T.J. Bishop, assistant chief of operations and training for San Juan Island EMS. “She indirectly has contributed to saving countless lives in the San Juan Islands due to her love of community service and servant leadership,” Bishop says. “Working with our vulnerable population through care coordination and injury prevention [minimizes] use of our 9-1-1 system for preventable problems,” Volk says, adding that the agency has provided grab bars, safety poles, medication dispensers, walkers, and “Files of Life” along with other needs. In 2021, Volk and her colleagues installed 25 car seats, provided 9 helmets to children, and assisted over 100 patients. Volk directs the Community Outreach program at San Juan Island EMS, which helps her community achieve one of the highest cardiac arrest save rates in the country, says Bishop. Last year, Volk awarded over 461 CPR, Basic Life Support, and First Aid certifications to members of the public, as well as teaching instructor level courses, wilderness courses and infectious disease prevention courses.

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Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue serves citizens as a full-service fire and EMS transport agency with 120 sworn personnel responding to 13,000 emergency calls for service annually. The department employs 5 frontline ALS ambulances and 5 frontline ALS suppression units covering 58.9 square miles with a population of 59,000 residents, and an annual operating budget of \$29 million. Palm Beach Gardens Fire Rescue embodies the spirit of the Wellness and Resilience Award, says Deputy Fire Chief James Ippolito. “We take pride in the various proactive programs we have implemented to ensure wellness and resiliency is embedded within the culture of our department,” says Ippolito. Subject matter experts in medicine, sleep, sports performance and first responder fitness were consulted to oversee the department’s many wellness initiatives. The Division Chief of Training and Professional Development—who serves as the department’s health and safety officer—is charged with overseeing the Health and Wellness Committee. From day one of the department’s academy, recruits participate in physical conditioning under the guidance of a physical therapist who instructs on body mechanics and injury prevention. All shift personnel complete job-specific workouts each shift; a registered dietitian provides shift-friendly recipes and nutritional advice; sleep experts provide training and policy direction on sleep hygiene; and a behavioral health expert trains on suicide awareness, substance abuse and mental health. Roughly 20% of the department are trained in the Peer Support program. “Our number one priority is to ensure each member of the department enjoys a long and healthy career and departs our organization with a sound body and mind to enjoy a well-deserved retirement,” Ippolito says.

[View nomination criteria](#)

About NAEMT - Formed in 1975 and more than 75,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians ([NAEMT](#)) is the only national association representing the professional interests of all emergency and mobile healthcare practitioners. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

About EMS World - [EMS World](#) serves the full spectrum of emergency medical services providers: EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, physicians, nurses, educators, researchers and administrators. Through a monthly publication, website, podcasts, webinars and the world’s largest EMS-dedicated annual conference, [EMS World Expo](#), EMS World is the leading authority on providing expert-guided clinical, management and regulatory content to a discerning and dedicated audience on the front lines of out-of-hospital care.

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