

# True Heroes: Alton Memorial Celebrates EMS Week

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ALTON – National EMS Week was established by presidential proclamation in 1973 and is an annual celebration to recognize and appreciate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provided by paramedics and EMTs in communities across our nation.

Alton Memorial Hospital is the resource hospital for 32 ambulance services, fire departments, and industrial fire/EMS services in the Illinois Department of Public Health's Region IV. The AMH ambulance service has served the area for more than 30 years.

"I am very proud of my staff," said Jason Bowman, manager of EMS at AMH. "They continue to work endlessly through this pandemic. And I would also like to thank our hospital, which has done an outstanding job providing the highest quality PPE to ensure protection for my staff."

The area's only hospital-based ambulance service's coverage area has expanded beyond Alton to almost 500 square miles. In addition to covering a larger territory, its fleet of ambulances is equipped with more life-saving pre-hospital medicine and resources.

"It's truly inspirational to see the incredible work that our EMS team does on a daily basis," said Brad Goacher, vice president of Operations for Alton Memorial Hospital. "Their dedication to AMH, the community and each other is amazing."

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 911 calls for patients with severe injuries and illness, such as cardiac arrests and strokes.

Alton Memorial typically celebrates EMS Week with a picnic for all 32 of its services for which it is a resource hospital. But the pandemic short-circuited those plans.

"The EMS staff at Alton Memorial are all truly men and women who strive to provide the best emergency care possible under challenging circumstances," said Dr. Angela Holbrook, medical director of the AMH Emergency Department. "And they do a great job of it. I want to send my personal congratulations to all of the clinical excellence award winners who have earned special recognition during EMS week. And many thanks to Jason for his consistently strong leadership, and to Rachel (Lair) for taking on the EMS coordinator role with such enthusiasm and determination. I am humbled by the dedication and heroism of Alton Memorial EMS, and I feel so fortunate to be working with such an amazing group of EMS professionals."

Winners in various EMS competitions for the past 12 months included Mike Akers, Shanena Brooks, Steve Carlson, Layla Simons, Rose Marie Hand and Aaron Darr.