

MEDIA CONTACT:
Ben Eckerson
717.232.5554 x.134
beckerson@neimangroup.com

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**PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ISSUES
STATEWIDE “CODE BLUE” TO INCREASE STAFFING LEVELS**

*EMS Organizations in Pennsylvania Band Together to Launch First-Ever
Statewide Recruitment Campaign*

HARRISBURG, PA – NOVEMBER 14, 2005 – In an attempt to prevent a looming health-care crisis, Pennsylvania’s emergency medical community is for the first time joining forces to launch a statewide recruitment campaign. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) companies throughout Pennsylvania are severely understaffed, some dangerously close to not being able to quickly respond to 9-1-1 calls. Today, EMS leaders from across the state announced that they are banding together to make a direct appeal to Pennsylvanians, asking them to consider EMS as a career choice.

“All of us live our lives with the comfort of knowing that emergency medical attention is just a phone call away,” said Steve Lyle, the executive director of the Emergency Health Services Federation in Harrisburg. “But the truth is Pennsylvania’s EMS industry is rapidly reaching a crisis situation. New recruits are down and the turnover rate of existing professionals in the field is high. If we don’t act now, our ability to quickly and effectively respond to medical emergencies will be in jeopardy. That’s why we are taking action now to drive both recruitment and retention.”

There are more than 54,000 EMS members at over 1,500 companies in Pennsylvania. Collectively, these First Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics respond to over 1.7 million emergency calls each year. Depending on the community served, EMS personnel can be a volunteer, partially paid or be full-time employed. Historically, EMS has handled recruitment locally. This new statewide effort is the first of its kind.

“I can’t imagine what would have happened to me if my call to EMS went unanswered,” said Katie Hess of Berks County, a kindergarten teacher who was a passenger in a car involved in a head-on crash last year in Lancaster County. “I was trapped in the back seat and in a lot of pain. The EMT who crawled into the car with me that night as the ‘jaws of life’ tore through the roof knew just what to do and just what to say. He was my Guardian Angel that night. I sure hope we can find more just like him.”

Lyle unveiled a multi-faceted recruitment campaign during a news conference at the Public Safety Center on the campus of Harrisburg Area Community College. The focal point of the campaign is a dynamic, high-impact movie trailer targeted at younger Pennsylvanians. The 60-second trailer, which spotlights the fast-paced and exhilarating nature of the emergency medical services industry, will begin airing on 376 screens in 50 movie theaters across the state this week.

(more)

“We need to let juniors and seniors in high school know about EMS as a terrific and rewarding career choice,” Lyle added. “Since we know that age group spends a lot of time at the movies, we felt like creating an in-your-face movie trailer would be a unique way to reach them. And we’ve also created a dynamic website – www.rollwithit.com – where those kids can learn more about EMS.”

Supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s EMS Office, the recruitment campaign also includes partnerships with Comcast and the Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters. Comcast will air a 30-second version of the movie trailer on cable stations in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. The Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters is encouraging its member television and radio stations to run the trailer as a public service announcement. Young EMTs will take the movie trailer into schools across Pennsylvania, sharing their experiences in the field and answering questions from students.

Today, there are EMS companies throughout Pennsylvania that are severely understaffed. On average, EMS organizations in the commonwealth have two to three full-time EMT or Paramedic positions open at a time. The result often times being that EMS coverage has to be farmed out to other companies, sometimes delaying response times.

Emergency medical technicians, paramedics and first responders save countless lives every day. There are many people who are still alive because of the quick response of trained EMS professionals who are able to administer medical attention on the spot to victims who may not have a moment to lose.

Anyone interested in learning more about this rewarding career is encouraged to visit PA EMS’ new website – www.rollwithit.com, where you can find more information about getting involved with Pennsylvania’s Emergency Medical Services. A toll-free phone number also is available to answer questions – 877-PA-MEDIC.

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