



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

David S. Keller, Commissioner
Commissioners' Office
14 North Main Street
Chambersburg, PA 17201
717-261-3812
dskeller@franklincountypa.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMISSIONERS HIGHLIGHT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL

May 19, 2017 – Chambersburg, PA – Franklin County Commissioners thanked emergency medical services (EMS) volunteers and employees from around Franklin County for their service to the residents of the county yesterday at the commissioners' public meeting.

Elizabeth Heller, Assistant Chief of EMS at Fayetteville Volunteer Fire Company, raised the commissioners' awareness about all the ways in which EMS personnel bring aid to residents of the county. "Most calls are critical situations regarding illness or injury," noted Assistant Chief Heller. "But increasingly we are also helping to address other needs the individual might have," she added.

Some folks that EMS is called upon to help are not in urgent need of care but have needs that are not being met. EMS has increasingly been helping residents connect with organizations and agencies in the county for food, non-emergency healthcare, baby cribs, child car seat installation assistance, counseling, treatment, housing, and other human services related needs.

All of this extra effort is all about prevention. Assistant Chief Heller said, "If we can help identify these non-emergent needs and help residents address them proactively, we increase the chances that these needs won't become critical or lead to serious illness or injury. A lot of folks don't know the services that are available to them, or how to access them. We help them make the connection."

"It's amazing that EMS personnel are doing all this extra work when their jobs are already so physically demanding and emotionally draining," said Commissioner Bob Thomas.

Commissioner Bob Ziobrowski commended those present for the tremendous number of hours of mandatory training that they must complete to become certified and keep their skills up to date.

###

For additional information on Franklin County visit www.franklincountypa.gov

Doug Bitner, Chief of Holy Spirit EMS, explained the staffing challenges facing most EMS units. “It’s getting harder and harder to recruit volunteers because of the amount of training required, less interest volunteering in general, and competing demands for people’s time. The average wage for paid EMS personnel is low and also makes it hard to recruit paid staff,” he said.

Commissioner and Board Chairman Dave Keller said, “Emergency medical services is a vital public service and it’s important that we understand and show our appreciation for the time, effort, and personal sacrifice that EMS personnel put forth to respond when we need them, as well as the new work they are doing to address other needs of people in our community in an effort to prevent future illness or injury.”

To help raise awareness of EMS, the work they do, and the challenges they face, the commissioners adopted the attached proclamation declaring May 21-27, 2017, as National Emergency Medical Services Week in Franklin County, and called upon the residents of Franklin County to observe EMS Week with appropriate programs, ceremonies and activities.



###