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Jersey City Launches Community Focused 911 Responder Service To Expand Existing EMS with More than 300 Volunteers; First in the USA Modeled after Israel

Training Begins this Week with Program Serving as a Model for Other Cities; Goal of to Reduce Response Times to Under Three Minutes

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announced that the **first community-based emergency response program in the United States that uses citizen volunteers and GPS mobile app based technology** to reduce emergency response times for ambulatory calls is launching in Jersey City, with more than **300 volunteers** registered and training to begin this week.

A partnership between the Jersey City Medical Center–Barnabas Health and the City of Jersey City, United Rescue follows the highly successful model designed by United Hatzalah of Israel, where average emergency response time is just three minutes. The inaugural volunteer orientation will be held at **5 p.m. on July 30, 2015, at the Jersey City Museum, 350 Montgomery Street.**

“The response from the community has been overwhelming and we see this as an innovative way to use technology to bridge the gap in response times and save lives,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We are excited to get this program off the ground and believe it can be a model for other communities across the country. When every second matters, we want to deliver the fastest, best medical service to our residents.”

The United Hatzalah program was established in 2006 in Israel and currently fields more than 2,500 trained volunteers who respond to more than 200,000 emergency calls annually. As in Israel, Jersey City’s program aims to include volunteers from all sectors of the city’s diverse community.

“We are thrilled to be exporting our Israeli techniques to help the residents of Jersey City get better, faster emergency services,” said **United Hatzalah Founder and President Eli Beer, who will be on hand for the initial training.** “We look forward to sharing in the success of United Rescue, Jersey City!”

Through the program, when residents call 911 a dispatcher will immediately deploy both an ambulance and a community-based emergency responder. The United Rescue technology uses a GPS-enabled mobile app to track and deploy the nearest volunteer responders who are able to quickly navigate through dense urban areas on ambucycles or on foot -- whichever is fastest.

For example, an office worker could be suffering from a heart attack -- while someone who could save his life might be, unaware, in a meeting a floor below. This lack of information exchange, Mayor Fulop, the leadership of Jersey City Medical Center and United Rescue believe, should no longer be the difference between life and death. The goal of the program is to ensure that there is always a cadre of trained and equipped volunteers, who can be instantly located and dispatched from the 911 operator and on any scene in the city immediately.

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CBEC volunteers begin treatment in order to stabilize a patient's condition until the JCMC EMS arrive on the scene, with an objective of reaching patients within 150 seconds from the time of the emergency call to treatment. The national standard for ambulance response times is eight minutes and 59 seconds; the Jersey City Medical Center ambulance response time is approximately six minutes.

“Response time is integral in improving patient outcomes,” said **Joseph F. Scott, FACHE- President and CEO, Jersey City Medical Center**. “The United Rescue program will help increase Jersey City Medical Center’s already world-renowned survival rates and ensure that the residents of Jersey City receive the most prompt, professional, and proficient prehospital care.”

Jersey City’s United Rescue program – which is funded exclusively through private charitable donations – is expected to be a model for other cities across the country. Although the model has been successfully deployed in locations in Argentina, Brazil, Panama and Lithuania, Jersey City will be the first city in the United States to deploy the program.

“United Hatzalah saves, on average, over 100 lives a day in Israel,” said **Mark Gerson, a NYC-based entrepreneur and philanthropic leader of United Hatzalah and United Rescue**. “By bringing this model to Jersey City through United Rescue, Mayor Steve Fulop and the remarkable emergency response professionals at the Jersey City Medical Center will be able to have proportionately the same results in Jersey City -- and get treatment to people in the city in their most vulnerable moments.”

Whether heart attacks, strokes or traffic accidents, the difference between life and death is often determined by how quickly an ambulance can reach the scene of an incident. Jersey City Medical Center’s EMS Department maintains some of the fastest response times in the nation with an average response time of less than six minutes. United Rescue’s model takes these response times a step further and recognizes that many victims could be saved if a nearby neighbor, coworker or fellow citizen were equipped to help during that initial window of time.

The first 300 applicants come from all neighborhoods of the city and include doctors, business professionals, students, and retired individuals, amongst others. The first class of 50 volunteers — all of whom either live, work or attend school in Jersey City — will receive lifesaving medical equipment upon the successful completion of a comprehensive, 60-hour course in medical first response. Class sizes are kept small so students receive individualized attention and are taught by JCMC EMTs and will be ongoing as the program continues to expand.

Training will include how to effectively obtain vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respirations, lung sounds), how to recognize the signs and symptoms of chest pain and cardiac emergencies, obtaining CPR/AED certification at the professional level, how to perform oxygen administration and have awareness of respiratory emergencies (asthma, COPD, emphysema), and the response for large scale incidents and mass casualty emergencies that require the cooperation of multiple agencies.

“This will be the first program of its kind in the United States,” said **Paul Sosman, United Rescue Program Supervisor at Jersey City Medical Center**. “I am confident that the United Rescue program will enhance our EMS system further and save even more lives.”

The program is expected to be operational in the fall and anyone who is interested in becoming a Jersey City Community Based Emergency Caregiver can continue to register at the program’s website at <http://www.unitedrescue.us>.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699. To request press access, please email pr@impmedia.co.il or mrabson@barnabashealth.org. ///