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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 12th, 2015

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Jersey City Graduates First Class Of United Rescue EMTs

First Program In Country To Use This Technology, Which Connects Closest Volunteer With Emergency Via Smartphone; Will Reduce Average Response Times To Under Three Minutes

JERSEY CITY – Today, **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and officials from the **Jersey City Medical Center-Barnabas Health**, along with United Rescue representatives will graduate the first 50 volunteers of what is the nation’s **first community-based emergency response program, United Rescue. Roughly 650 more Jersey City volunteers have already begun the process of signing up for training. The program, which leverages citizen volunteers and GPS mobile app-based technology** to reduce emergency response times for ambulatory calls, is expected to make Jersey City the fastest EMS response time in the country.

A partnership between the Jersey City Medical Center–Barnabas Health and the City of Jersey City, United Rescue follows the highly successful and innovative model designed by United Hatzalah of Israel, where average emergency response time is just three minutes.

“We’re using the tools we already have - residents and GPS-based technology - to bridge the gap in response times so we can reach emergencies faster and save more lives,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Just like technology and apps have revolutionized how so many industries operate, this program will transform how cities approach emergency response by pairing ambulance service with community based emergency caregivers.”

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 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.

“It is so exciting to see the first 51 volunteers graduating with the skills and equipment needed to save lives in Jersey City,” said **United Hatzalah Founder and President Eli Beer, who will be on hand for the graduation.** “I could not be more proud that the lifesaving model we developed in Israel is being brought by United Rescue to Jersey City and that these volunteers will be on the streets saving lives.”

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As in Israel, Jersey City's program includes volunteers from all sectors of the city's diverse community with the first 700 volunteers hailing from all neighborhoods of the city. The volunteers include doctors, business professionals, students, and retired individuals, amongst others. The first class of 50 volunteers graduating tonight have all successfully completed a comprehensive, 60-hour course in medical first response taught by JCMC EMTs.

Training included 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.

"Response time is integral in improving patient outcomes," said **Joseph F. Scott, FACHE- President and CEO, Jersey City Medical Center – Barnabas Health**. "The faster a person trained in emergency medical care arrives will save lives and 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. We are looking forward to sharing success stories with the media related to the volunteers of United Rescue."

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 will no longer exist with United Rescue, as the program will ensure 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.

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.

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.

"Jersey City and United Rescue are proud to have graduated the first 50 community based emergency care givers in the United States and we look forward to working with the JCMC to reduce response times even further and get help to people faster," said **Paul Sosman, United Rescue Program Supervisor at Jersey City Medical Center**. "With the launch of this program, we hope to have help at people's side within two minutes of calling 911 which is something unheard of anywhere else in the United States."

United Rescue was made possible by nearly \$2 million in private donations.

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 jenniferm@cnj.org or [201-376-0699](tel:201-376-0699). ////