



Service Spotlight - Wolcott

Although it was established by 10 citizens in 1973, Wolcott Volunteer Ambulance Association did not answer its first emergency call until May of 1974.

While eager to hit the ground running, they needed to get their 1965 Cadillac ambulance ready for service. The vehicle was purchased by a North Haven businessman for \$1. Although it was a bargain, even by 1973 standards, the Cadillac was in need of a motor, transmission and a new paint job. Funding needed to prepare and stock the ambulance came from the pockets of charter members, community fundraisers and from the Wolcott Junior Woman's Club.

A spare bay at Paul Shea's gas station was the first home of the association. Only a few months later, a barn building at the town public works garage became headquarters. It was complete with a tiny cinder block bunk room and a small space for paperwork. Wolcott Ambulance answer 175 calls that first year. They had not yet acquired the needed manpower to cover calls full time. Volunteers covered calls Monday through Friday from 6:00PM – 6:00AM, and 24 hours on weekends. Campion Ambulance in Waterbury covered the remaining hours.



The donation of a hunting shed by a local landowner became a much needed addition to headquarters. "They brought it in on a flatbed truck", explained Bill Barratt, Wolcott's longtime chief. "It would not fit through the gate at the public works garage. They had to take the gate and fencing apart to fit".

In the early years, it could not be assumed that if you called the police department for an ambulance you would get WVAA. Callers had to specifically request the volunteer ambulance. If not, the police department would call Campion to respond. A newspaper article in Wolcott's archives describes how residents should request the volunteer ambulance when calling in an emergency.

As the years went on, WVAA acquired a second ambulance from Naugatuck Ambulance. In 1982 they upgraded to EMT-Intermediate level. The Cadillacs gave way to more modern ambulances and advanced technology.

In 1979, the advent of the Wolcott High School EMT program helped bolster ranks with teenagers interested in EMS. During that era, an on-duty ambulance would be posted in the parking lot of the school. A driver would sit with the ambulance and wait for a call to come in. Then, students certified as EMT's would be released from school to answer the emergency call. That system remained in place for more than 10 years. "That is where I started", said Barratt "I was in high school when I became an EMT in 1983". They became a licensed Paramedic service in 2001. Today, Wolcott runs at least one paid crew 24/7. They have four licensed ambulances and easily man at least three ALS units most days with a mix of paid and volunteer staff. In 2019, they responded to 2230 emergency calls for service. Their headquarters is a modern, well-appointed facility with ample space for ambulances, supplies, training, and administrative uses. "We have come a very long way", said Assistant Chief and longtime volunteer Jay Skerritt, as he looks through old photo albums and news clippings. "It certainly isn't the same place it was when I joined in 1980".



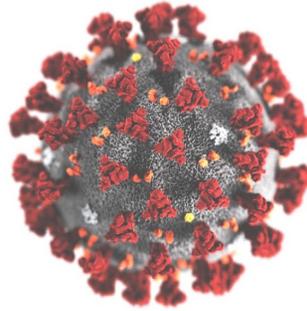
Statistics:

Chief: William Barratt
Assistant Chief: Joseph "Jay" Skerritt
Deputy Chief: Andrew Albert
Number of Volunteer Members: 55
Number of Paid EMT's and Paramedics: 14
Number of Ambulances: 4
2019 Call Volume: 2230
Funding: Town of Wolcott, Ambulance Billing Revenue, Annual Fund Drive



Coronavirus Preparedness for EMS

The big question that everyone has asked about when it comes to Coronavirus, is personal protective equipment. What kind of PPE do I need to wear to protect myself from this virus. From what you hear and see on the news differs quite a bit from what is actually taking place and what the CDC has suggested. I would like to say, the United States is taking all of the appropriate precautions when it comes to this virus.



Background

Coronavirus is similar to the flu with its symptoms although over time can lead to infection for those who aren't strong enough to fight off the virus. There is currently no vaccination for it. Most people who have gotten it have lived despite what you hear from the media. We keep hearing about the mortality rate being 2.5%. The cases confirmed are only those who seek treatment. CT DPH reported at a state healthcare coalition meeting this week that not everyone is seeking medical attention which would drop that mortality rate significantly. The symptoms are very similar to the flu; fever, cough, gastro issues, body aches, shortness of breath. There is a slight risk of infection but outside of China, the risk is pretty small. In the United States there are a total of 15 cases currently. The US has a pretty good travel-band in place for those who are trying to get back into the US. This especially applies to those returning from China. This is a good thing because it prevents this virus from spreading like a wildfire. So, that's the background, now to get back to the big question, PPE.

Personal Protective Equipment

When it comes to PPE, we should be wearing the following standard, contact and airborne precautions:

- Gloves
- Eye protection
- N95 or higher level respirator
- Disposable Isolation Gown

The CDC states there is no need for a Tyvek suit with tape covering all of the seams. If you have the four items above and the patient is wearing a mask, you will be protected. The EMT or driver who provided direct patient care including moving a stretcher should wear PPE while doing patient care, remove it, and then perform proper hand hygiene before driving. While driving, the driver should continue to wear the N95 mask.

Following the transport of this patient, it is appropriate to do a full decon of your ambulance and supplies.

Decontamination

- A disinfectant containing bleach is said to be the best item for the decontamination process but make sure to follow the procedures to have the proper contact time.
- Open up the ambulance doors to remove infectious particles
- When cleaning, wear a gown, gloves, eye protection and N95 mask.
- Clean all surfaces that may have come in contact with the patient.
- Clean and disinfect all reusable patient care equipment.
- Place all contaminated supplies and PPE in a red biohazard bag.

What is Coronavirus?

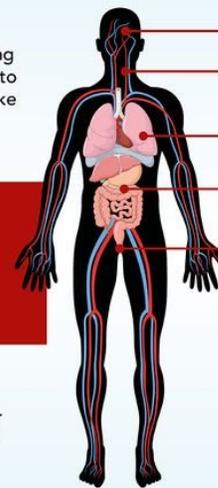
Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases like pneumonia, MERS and SARS

SEVERE SYMPTOMS

- High Fever (100.4°F or higher)
- Pneumonia
- Kidney failure
- Death

TRANSMISSION

Coughs or sneezes from infected person or touching contaminated objects

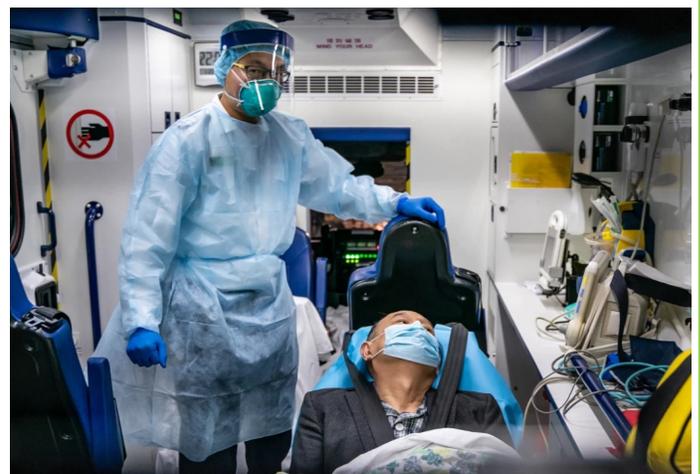


COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Fever
- After 2 to 7 days develop a dry cough
- Mild breathing difficulties at the outset
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Diarrhea
- General body aches

* Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ USA Today

EXPRESS



February's CME—Trauma and Stroke Review

We had over 40 guests for our Stroke and Trauma Review CME on February 19th. Monika Nelson, Trauma Coordinator for Waterbury Health, spoke about the protocols and updates on best practices for the hospital. She also reviewed a couple of trauma cases that EMS has brought to our facility over the past couple of years.



Dayna Failla, Stroke Coordinator reviewed a few key cases and talked about how Waterbury is hitting the times set in place by the Joint Commission to give the patient the best possible outcome. We are hitting these times with flying colors. Waterbury Hospital continues to strive towards excellence in the continuum of patient care. Our presenters focused on the importance of EMS assessment in the field of pre-hospital care and seamlessly incorporated the role of Waterbury Hospital's Emergency Department.



A Tribute to One of Our Own

On January 29, we lost a member of our EMS family. Paramedic Steven DeCapua worked at AMR for more than 30 years and was a respected and admired member of the EMS community.

Friends and family gathered to pay tribute to Steve on February 15 in his hometown of East Windsor. Steve leaves a wife and four children. He also leaves the many in the EMS community who loved him.

Rest in Peace Steve. Thank you for your service.

In the photo: Members of AMR's National Honor Guard flank the cremated remains of Paramedic Steven DeCapua at funeral services held on February 15.



Upcoming Events

Waterbury Hospital

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 6PM - 9PM

CME—Burns Injury Training

- Jason Bresky, RN CCRN from Bridgeport Burn Center will be giving education and support about the advancement of care for Connecticut's burn patients.

Offsite Classes

March 28, 2020 through March 29, 2020

EMT Refresher—**Thomaston Ambulance

- 8AM - 4PM both Saturday and Sunday
- **Call Skip Gelati at (860) 601-7717 or show up Saturday morning.

March 2, 2020 through March 27, 2020

High Performance EMT — *Oxford Ambulance

- 8AM - 4PM, Monday through Friday

April 27, 2020 through June 25, 2020

Night High Performance EMT— *Oxford Ambulance

- 5PM - 10PM on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday classes on 5/2 & 5/16 from 8AM - 4PM.

May 11, 2020 through June 24, 2020

High Performance EMT — *Oxford Ambulance

- 8AM - 4PM, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
- *For more information, call (203) 881-5216 ext. 7 or visit oxfordambulance.org