

Greene EMS welcomes tech upgrade

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CATSKILL — Greene County emergency medical services recently welcomed the latest technology in medical communication, elevating them to a regional leader in automated record-keeping.

"Personnel will no longer have to record information on paper, which is expensive and not as accurate," said Mark Evans, president of Greene County Medical Systems.

The digital system, which includes 21 new durable Toughbook laptops and new electronic patient care reporting software, was made possible by the Greene County Rural Health Network, who contributed \$55,000 to the cause.

"Computerizing the documentation of patient care is a growing trend among health care providers," said Michael Gelfand, president of the Greene County Rural Health Network.

The laptops will now enable emergency services personnel to enter and transmit patient reports electronically from the ambulance, drastically improving medical incident processing for billing and administrative purposes.

Not only will it make the insurance payment process faster, it will enable emergency response crews to quickly process incident information and prepare for the next emergency.

"The Network has long been a supporter of emergency medical services in Greene County," Gelfand said, "and we view the electronic documentation of patient care as an important component for assuring excellence in care and reducing administrative costs."

The digital system will also enable statistical data to be built easily.

Greene County receives about 10,500 emergency medical calls each year, and now at least 90 percent, or 9,500, can be recorded electronically.

"Greene County probably now has the highest percentage of calls being recorded electronically of any county in the state," Evans said, "and the first county in the state to have all its calls using the same software."

The statistical data can now be analyzed to determine how many heart attacks, head trauma incidents, allergic reactions, or other emergencies were reported in the county. This was not possible with the antiquated paper system.

This could help build patient demographics, trends, patterns, effectiveness of treatment and quality of care, according to Gelfand.

"A squad can also analyze data on its own performance and compare that to countywide performance," he said.

Ron Rouse, a consultant for Greene County Emergency Medical Systems, assisted with the development of the system and getting the message out there.

"We're able to collect statistics a lot faster," Rouse said, "and understand precisely what's going on out there."

The squads now participating in the system include Greene County Emergency Medical Systems and town ambulance companies in Cairo, Catskill, Coxsackie, Durham and Greenville.

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