



# FANWOOD RESCUE SQUAD

Spring/Summer Newsletter 2024



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Memorial Day Weekend marks the unofficial start of summer in New Jersey, bringing with it the joys of trips to the boardwalk, early evening bike rides, and dining al fresco in our downtown areas. However, along with these pleasures, emergency responders often see a spike in incidents such as heat-related illnesses, pedestrian accidents, and allergic reactions. Preparedness and awareness are crucial as we embrace the warmer months.

One of the primary concerns for EMTs during the summer is the risk of heat exhaustion and heat strokes, often precipitated by dehydration. Symptoms of dehydration include excessive thirst, sweating, and elevated body temperature. It's vital to understand the difference between dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion is indicated by symptoms such as flushing, heavy sweating, weakness, and an inability to cool down. Heat stroke presents more severely, with hot and dry skin, altered mental states, and potentially even seizures. At-risk populations include the elderly and young children. Checking on elderly neighbors, especially during hot days, can be life-saving. Furthermore, alcohol exacerbates dehydration due to its diuretic effects, often leading to increased urination. If consuming alcohol in the heat, it is advisable to hydrate beforehand and maintain water intake throughout the day. With the increasing development of luxury apartments in our area, increased pedestrian and vehicle traffic warrant heightened caution. The surge in pedestrian-related incidents calls for everyone to be extremely careful. Drivers should reduce speed and remain vigilant, especially in high foot-traffic areas. Pedestrians should ensure they are visible and only cross streets when it is safe, while bicyclists should wear helmets and reflective clothing. If everyone does their part, we can improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Summer also means lots of outdoor activities, and there is often a corresponding rise in allergic reactions, including those from food, insect stings, and seasonal allergens. Parents should ensure that Epi-Pens are not expired and in good condition. Symptoms of severe allergic reactions include hives, facial swelling, breathing



difficulties, and a rapid onset of symptoms. Immediate action can be crucial, so don't hesitate to call 911 if you suspect an allergic reaction.

The Fanwood Rescue Squad is always actively seeking new members. If you've ever considered becoming an EMT, we invite you to reach out through our website at [www.fanwoodrescue.com](http://www.fanwoodrescue.com). Nurses in New Jersey can challenge the NREMT test without taking the full EMT course, and we welcome individuals from all backgrounds to join our team.

As we look forward to a season filled with community and celebration, let's commit to keeping it safe and enjoyable for everyone. Rescue Squad and their distinct yellow-brown ambulances, and have often been greeted by those they have grown up with.



**Karolyn Buckridee, MD**  
President

### SUPPORT THE FANWOOD RESCUE SQUAD – EVERY CONTRIBUTION AND VOLUNTEER COUNTS!

The Fanwood Rescue Squad thrives through the dedication of volunteers and the generosity of community members like you. We are a 100% volunteer organization, not funded by municipal resources. Your donations help us maintain our emergency vehicles and purchase essential, life-saving equipment and supplies.

As an official 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, your contributions are tax-deductible. Furthermore, many employers offer donation-matching programs, potentially doubling the impact of your gift. Consider checking if your company participates.

In addition to financial support, we urgently need more volunteers to help us respond to medical emergencies. Volunteering with us is a profound way to give back to the community, learn valuable skills, and truly make a difference. Whether you can give a few hours a week or more, every bit of help counts.

For convenience and environmental consideration, donate at [fanwoodrescue.com/donate](http://fanwoodrescue.com/donate). Join us in our mission to provide vital emergency services to our community—your support is invaluable!



## A TALE OF TWO PATIENTS: THE IMPORTANCE OF COORDINATED HEALTHCARE

Recently, our team responded to a call at a residence for a patient who had fallen and lost consciousness. Upon arrival, we assessed the situation, and soon after, paramedics took over, conducting more detailed tests. They discovered that the patient's blood glucose was dangerously low, a condition also noted in a similar incident earlier that week. Out of curiosity, I examined the patient's medications and found multiple pill bottles, each prescribed by different doctors and filled at various pharmacies.

A few days later, another call led us to a different residence where a patient had fallen, sustaining significant facial injuries. Here too, the patient's daughter handed me several pill bottles from different doctors and pharmacies.

You may wonder how such situations arise. Unfortunately, they are becoming increasingly common due to the convenience of urgent care centers. Many people opt for these facilities instead of establishing a relationship with a primary care doctor who could oversee and coordinate all aspects of their medical care.

A primary care physician typically conducts a thorough initial physical exam to establish a baseline of your health. Any prescribed medications are recorded and managed centrally under the doctor's supervision. They often recommend that all prescriptions be filled at the same pharmacy to ensure that any potential drug interactions are noted and addressed by the pharmacist in consultation with the doctor. This system ensures a seamless flow of communication and a team approach to patient care, minimizing errors and enhancing safety.

In the cases of my patients, neither had a primary care doctor. When health issues arose, they visited local urgent care centers, received prescriptions from various doctors, and filled these at different pharmacies, sometimes never visiting the same one twice. For instance, the first patient was unknowingly prescribed the same class of diabetes medication only with different names by different doctors due to a language barrier, leading to an overdose that caused her blood sugar to plummet and resulted in repeated falls.

The second patient, treated for hypertension, experienced a similar issue. Unaware of the medications he was already taking, he was overprescribed calcium channel blockers and angiotensin receptor blockers by an urgent care doctor, which significantly lowered his blood pressure, causing dizziness, lightheadedness, and a severe fall.

The best way to prevent such medication errors is to have all medical care coordinated by a single primary care physician and to consistently use one pharmacy for all prescriptions. This

approach ensures robust checks and balances, where your doctor has oversight over all medications, and any duplications or interactions are likely to be flagged by your pharmacist. With a healthcare team that knows you well, you are far more protected from the dangerous errors like those described here.



**Patricia Buckridee**



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### RILEY YAU

My name is Riley Yau, I'm a junior at the Academy for Information Technology and play rugby for the Union Mudturtles. I joined the Fanwood Rescue Squad in September 2023, and it has quickly become like a second family to me. Due to the physicality of rugby, I frequently find myself in doctor's offices, which has led me to a unique perspective of the human body. This sparked a more profound interest in medicine for me. I am now nearing the end of my EMT class at Union College and I am looking forward to getting more involved in the EMS field.



Since joining the Fanwood Rescue Squad, I have gained valuable clinical and life experience both on calls and through crew training. Regardless of how long they have been there or seniority, every member is always willing to help and teach, which is not something you will find everywhere. The Squad has truly fostered my interest in medicine and EMS and provided me ample opportunity to learn, both about the field of emergency medicine and about who I am and where I want to take my professional life in the future. I can easily say that serving my community through the Fanwood Rescue Squad is one of the most fulfilling parts of my life.