

Madam Chairperson Senator Lee and Committee Members:

I am Cheryl Rising, FNP here in Bismarck and representing the North Dakota Nurse Practitioner Organization as the legislative liaison and am the current State Rep. from ND to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

Nurse practitioners work independent in ND and have reimbursement for services. Discussion has been held about the possibility of having the NPs in communities work with the paramedics going out on calls. This may decrease unnecessary transporting to the hospital and decrease in the health care dollars and utilization of the ED.

I bring this up for discussion on this topic. An article was written in the Nurse.com about Mesa, Arizona trying this model.

Thank you

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Mountain Vista NP, fire station join forces to respond to 911 calls

By Linda Childers
Monday April 1, 2013



Tom Morris, RN, left, and Mesa (Ariz.) paramedic and fire Capt. Brent Burgett respond to low-level 911 calls in a transitional response vehicle in place of a full-engine response.

(Photo courtesy of Tom Morris, RN)

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Six months ago, Tom Morris, RN, MSN, FNP, began working in a venue far different than the traditional hospital setting where he's spent the past 20 years of his career.

As part of a unique partnership between the Mesa (Ariz.) Fire Department and Mountain Vista Medical Center in Mesa, Morris now rides in a transitional response vehicle with paramedic and fire Capt. Brent Burgett. The two respond to low-level 911 calls in place of a full-engine response and treat myriad conditions, such as dehydration, minor injuries and respiratory problems.

"We were approached by the mayor of Mesa and the City Council and fire department about this opportunity a year ago," said Tony Marinello, CEO of Mountain Vista Medical Center. "This is the first time a hospital and fire department have formed a partnership, and we saw this as an opportunity to enhance medical resources and better meet the needs of Mesa residents."

The area chosen for the pilot project is one where the fire department saw the highest need for medical assistance, and is home to many retirees and "snowbirds," people who live there only during winter.

"A lot of the calls we receive are from people who are in nursing homes, or are bedridden, or who don't have a primary care provider in the area," Morris said. "In the past, these 911 calls were handled by deploying a fully equipped, four-person fire engine and an ambulance in the event that a person needed to be transported to the hospital."

The transitional response vehicle, outfitted with a private treatment area and much of the same equipment in an urgent-care clinic, has allowed Morris and Burgett to treat 50% of patients without a trip to the ED.

"After assessing the severity of a patient's condition, and determining they have a reliable support system and someone to keep an eye on them, we can often treat their medical condition on the spot," said Morris. "We always follow up the next day with a phone call to see how they are doing. If their condition has deteriorated, we call an emergency medical services unit to transport them to the hospital."

Although the pilot program originally only was funded for a year, Marinello said the hospital plans to continue the program because it provides a great community service.

For information, visit www.MVMedicalCenter.com or www.MesaAZ.gov/Fire.

Linda Childers is a freelance writer. Send letters to editorWest@nurse.com.

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Kay Schroer

A great first step. Though I have never understood why the fire service responds to non-fire emergencies. Why not have appropriately staffed ambulances and kitted ambulances instead. Leave the big fire truck at home. My take is that it is a jobs program for the firemen since there are so few fires.

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Krista Brandon

Awesome proactive program right in my backyard.

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