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March 2, 2010

## **Salt Lake hospitals work with local fire departments to save more heart attack victims**

Salt Lake City--The four healthcare systems operating Salt Lake County's community hospitals have banded together to provide funding to several area fire departments for the purchase of Blue Tooth technology. This technology will allow first responders to transmit 12-lead EKG data directly from the ambulance to the hospital, enabling a faster diagnosis of heart attacks.

Currently, not all of the nine Salt Lake County emergency medical services (EMS) agencies have the ability to transmit EKG data in real-time. Due to limited budgets and an economic downturn, several EMS agencies have been financially restricted from purchasing the vitally important Blue Tooth technology.

Thanks to the generosity of local hospital systems, all emergency medical services agencies in Salt Lake County will soon have Blue Tooth technology; the missing piece to saving more heart attack victims. Representatives from IASIS Healthcare, Intermountain Healthcare, MountainStar Healthcare and University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics proactively collaborated to fund the purchase of Blue Tooth technology for the EMS agencies in need of this equipment.

Fire departments benefitting from the donation include Salt Lake City, South Salt Lake and West Valley City. Once the technology is fully implemented throughout Salt Lake County, this collaborative effort is estimated to save 25-30 lives annually.

Utah Hospitals & Health Systems Association (UHA) established a foundation to manage the donations. Hospital representatives presented the \$133,000 donation to fire department representatives at the February UHA Board of Trustees meeting. Steven B. Bateman, UHA

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Board member and CEO of St. Mark's Hospital, made the presentation to fire department officials.

"This technology is a powerful tool in reducing fatalities due to heart attacks," commented Mr. Bateman. "By working cooperatively with our EMS providers to reduce treatment times, local hospitals are able to provide the highest possible level of emergency cardiac care to the communities we serve."

With Blue Tooth technology on board, detailed heart data gathered by the EKG leads are immediately transmitted to the hospital. An emergency department physician reads the transmitted data, and when a heart attack is confirmed, activates the hospital's cardiac catheterization team.

In most cases, the patient is more quickly taken to the hospital's cath lab since there is no need to conduct testing in the emergency department to confirm a heart attack. A lifesaving balloon is inflated in the blocked artery that is causing the patient's heart attack, which reestablishes blood flow and reduces damage to the cardiac muscle.

Dr. Steve Joyce, Medical Director of the Salt Lake City Fire Department, commented, "This generous contribution from the Salt Lake City hospitals through the efforts of the UHA will enable all of the emergency services agencies in the Salt Lake area to provide state-of-the-art care to patients with heart attacks."

One million Americans have an acute myocardial infarction or heart attack annually, and half a million of those sufferers die. According to a national study in 2007, patients who received proper treatment for a ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) within 90 minutes of hospital arrival had only a three percent in-hospital mortality rate. This number increased to 4.2 percent when delays in treatment fell between 91 to 120 minutes and elevated to 5.7 percent if 121 to 150 minutes lapsed. When treatment was delayed for more than 150 minutes, mortality rates increased to 7.4 percent. (Nallamothu, Bradley, & Krumholz, 2007).

UHA is a private, not-for-profit trade association established in 1920 to represent Utah's hospitals and health systems.

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