

# Communication Boards Added to Ambulances Statewide

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*Joan Green, President of Greenhouse Publications, developed the First Responder Communication Boards.*

In the world of emergency medicine, there is not a routine or typical call. A recent example of the challenges crews face happened when the Kanawha County Emergency Ambulance Authority (KCEAA) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) field providers were dispatched to a 911 emergency call. Upon arrival, the EMS crew quickly determined that the patient had communication difficulties resulting from strokes. The crew was still able to communicate with the patient thanks to a new tool, the First Responder Communication Board. According to Captain Thomas Bibb, Education Supervisor for KCEAA, "The EMS field providers were not only able to utilize the communication board to determine the patient's chief complaint, which was unrelated to a stroke, but also the level of pain and onset time." First Responder Communication Boards had been placed on all KCEAA ambulances just two hours prior to this emergency call.

The boards were purchased by the West Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services, EMS for Children (EMSC) Program. EMSC recognized a need to communicate with nonverbal patients and utilized federal funding to purchase a communication board for every transporting unit in the state of West Virginia. This tool allows an EMS field provider to appropriately assess and treat the nonverbal patient medically and with dignity. The First Responder Communication Boards may be used on pediatric, adolescent or adult patients. "The KCEAA field providers should be commended for recognizing the need and utilizing all available tools to assess and treat their patients," said Vicki Hildreth, EMSC Coordinator.

For additional information regarding First Responder Communication Boards, please contact Vicki Hildreth, EMSC Coordinator, at [Vicki.L.Hildreth@wv.gov](mailto:Vicki.L.Hildreth@wv.gov) or via phone at (304) 558-3956.