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Contact:

Calling all heroes: Emergency Medical Dispatchers honored

Four to receive Dispatchers of the Year award for outstanding service

KING COUNTY, WA —Four local residents are being honored as King County Emergency Medical Dispatchers of the Year for their outstanding contributions to the public's health and safety. As part of King County's world-class Emergency Medical Services/Medic One system, emergency medical dispatchers protect the public's health and safety everyday with critical medical advice to callers and by making quick decisions about the best emergency medical care.

The awards recognize overall excellence and expert response to critical incidents, and they are given annually by Public Health - Seattle & King County's Emergency Medical Services Division during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 10-16, 2011.

"King County's emergency medical dispatchers are the lifeline for thousands of callers who each year dial 911 for help," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "The four being honored this year deserve our deepest thanks and appreciation for their skill and commitment."

This year's award winners include Alison Barlow of Tacoma and Melissa Johnson of Puyallup from Valley Communications Center, and Roky Louie of Tukwila and Josh Baker of Everett from Norcom Communications Center.

Ms. Barlow and Mr. Louie both received the award for sustained exemplary performance throughout the year. Ms. Johnson and Mr. Baker both received their awards for exemplary handling of a critical Emergency Medical Services incident. Ms. Johnson received her award for her quick action in response to a baby that was not breathing, and Mr. Baker was honored for his ability to quickly begin CPR instructions and provide reassurance to the caller.

Event details:

- On Friday, April 8 at 9:30 a.m., Norcom Communications Center will host an awards ceremony for their honored dispatchers in Room 1E-108 at Bellevue City Hall, 450 110th Avenue NE.
- On Wednesday, April 13 at 11 a.m., Valley Communications Center will host an awards ceremony for their honored dispatchers at their Kent facility, 27519 108th Ave SE.

“Emergency medical dispatchers play a critically important role as they evaluate patient signs and symptoms and provide life-saving instructions to bystanders over the telephone. They are an essential link in our emergency medical care system and a big reason why our survival rates from cardiac arrest are among the world’s best,” said Dr. Mickey Eisenberg, Medical Director for King County Emergency Medical Services Division of Public Health - Seattle & King County.

Valley Communications provides police, fire and medical dispatching in south King County, managing approximately 61,000 emergency medical calls in 2010. North East King County Regional Public Safety Communications Agency (NORCOM) provides police, fire and medical dispatching in the east and north regions of King County, managing approximately 45,000 emergency calls for medical assistance in 2010.

King County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operates in a coordinated partnership with four dispatch centers, six paramedic providers, and 35 fire departments. Funded through a countywide EMS/Medic One Levy, King County EMS utilizes a layered-response system providing a continuum of care for people in need of emergency medical services. For more information on King County EMS, visit www.metrokc.gov/health/ems/

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