



Advocacy Department

1150 Connecticut Ave., NW | Suite 300 | Washington, DC 20036
P 202-785-7900 | F 202-785-7950 | www.heart.org

Chairman of the Board
James J. Postl

President
John J. Warner, MD

Chairman-elect
Bertram L. Scott

President-elect
Ivor Benjamin, MD, FAHA

Immediate Past
Chairman of the Board
Alvin L. Roysse, JD, CPA

Immediate Past President
Steven R. Houser, PhD, FAHA

Treasurer
Raymond P. Vara, Jr.

Directors
Mary Ann Bauman, MD
Emelia J. Benjamin, MD, ScM, FAHA
Douglas S. Boyle
Lloyd H. Dean
Mitchell S. V. Elkind, MD, MS, FAHA
J. Donald Fancher
Linda Gooden
Ron W. Haddock
Robert A. Harrington, MD, FAHA
Marsha Jones
Stacey E. Rosen, MD
Lee Shapiro
David A. Spina
Bernard J. Tyson
Thomas Pina Windsor
Joseph C. Wu, MD, PhD, FAHA

Chief Executive Officer
Nancy A. Brown

Chief Operating Officer
Suzie Upton

Chief Science & Medical Officer
Rose Marie Robertson, MD, FAHA

October 18, 2017

Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Administrator Rao / Acting Administrator Mancini / Director Mulvaney:

On behalf of the American Heart Association (AHA) we write to urge you to update the classification of 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

Each year an estimated 350,000 cardiac arrest events occur in the United States in an out-of-hospital environment. Almost all of these events result in a call for help to 9-1-1. Emergency assistance from 9-1-1 professionals and quick intervention in the form of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation is absolutely critical to saving lives.

9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers, known collectively as Public Safety Telecommunicators, are a critical link in the cardiac arrest chain of survival. It is the Public Safety Telecommunicator, in partnership with the caller, who has the opportunity to identify a patient in cardiac arrest, provide the initial level of care by delivering CPR instructions to the caller, and quickly coordinate the appropriate level of help. The work performed by Public Safety Telecommunicators can make the difference between life and death.

The SOC is a valuable statistical resource that categorizes occupations according to the work performed. In the current version of the SOC, 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are labeled "Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers" and categorized as "Office and Administrative Support Occupations." This label and categorization are outdated. We support updating the detailed occupation name to "Public Safety Telecommunicators" and reclassifying them as "Protective Service Occupations."

“Public Safety Telecommunicator” is a more representative title and is more commonly used today than “dispatcher.” This title is also more descriptive of the complex work performed and public safety focus of these occupations. In some cases the job can entail simultaneously giving advice to a caller, using advanced technologies to retrieve medical information, and detecting background noises for potential safety issues for first responders. Coaching 9-1-1 callers through CPR and responding to the variety of other types of emergencies requires skill, specialized training, and calm under pressure. It also requires an incredible dedication to protecting members of the public and first responders. Accordingly, these occupations are more appropriately classified in the group for “Protective Service Occupations” – which includes playground monitors, meter maids, casino gaming surveillance officers, police officers, crossing guards, and many other occupations – than in the group for “Office and Administrative Support Occupations.”

We urge you to update the SOC immediately such that “Public Safety Telecommunicators” are classified as “Protective Service Occupations.” Public Safety Telecommunicators can make the difference between life and death, and the AHA supports revision of the SOC to make it a more accurate statistical resource and to appropriately recognize the work performed by our nation’s 9-1-1 professionals.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Christopher Kurz MD MS-HES FACEP
Chair, Systems of Care (SOC) Sub-Committee, Emergency Cardiovascular Care
American Heart Association



Mark Schoeberl
Executive Vice President, Advocacy and Health Quality
American Heart Association