



## *Joint News Release*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Memorial Healthcare and Owosso Fire Department Team Up to Bring Faster Care to Cardiac Patients**

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**Wednesday, November 18 (2015) – Owosso, Michigan** – Memorial Healthcare and the City of Owosso’s Fire Department have joined forces to help save lives and preserve quality of life for heart attack patients, hospital and emergency medical services officials said in a recent joint press release.

Paramedics usually do an electrocardiogram (ECG) to check the heart's rhythm and find out if the symptoms are due to a heart attack. Depending on what the rhythm looks like, and the symptoms described by the patient, paramedics may make a preliminary diagnosis of a heart attack. While the final diagnosis rests in the hands of doctors, that preliminary diagnosis is important because it allows paramedics to begin treatment immediately (often while still in the patient's home).

“All three of our ambulances have had monitors installed that allow our ECG machines to transmit results to Memorial’s emergency room at the touch of a button,” said Director of Public Safety Kevin Lenkart. “These portable 12-lead ECGs connect via modern link to a cellular telephone and digitized ECG information is transmitted to the hospital emergency room,” adds Lenkart.

This technology allows diagnosis before hospital arrival, improves pre-hospital triage of patients, and may facilitate pre-hospital therapy. In addition, the cellular telephone link can convey digitized information and thus improve on current telemetry systems.

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According to Memorial Healthcare Emergency Room physician Dr. Ronald Bishop, “A suspected heart attack is treated as an emergency because of the possible damage to your heart, and the risk of death. Early treatment can save your life and can limit the amount of damage to your heart muscle.”

At this time the average time from an Owosso paramedic hitting transmit to the hands of a Memorial Healthcare emergency physician is approximately 3 minutes and 30 seconds. In the past, staff in ambulances, without modems for their ECGs, sometimes would use their cellphones to take photos of ECG results and send them to hospitals. The process was slower and the images much less clear.

By obtaining an ECG prior to a patient’s arrival, Memorial Healthcare providers can divert patients to another facility for acute coronary intervention.

“Since implementation we have had at least one patient who was rushed directly to Sparrow for emergency cardiac surgery. That impacted their life, we’ll never know how much,” said Dr. Bishop. But, he added, the patient would likely have become a “cardiac cripple” without such rapid treatment.

After a 90-day pilot, Memorial Healthcare and Owosso Public Safety will investigate grants to upgrade equipment eliminating the need for a phone.

For additional information, visit <http://ci.owosso.mi.us/Departments-Services/Fire-EMS> or [MemorialHealthcare.org](http://MemorialHealthcare.org).

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