

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American Heart Association Honors EMS for Heart Attack Care Initiative

LOUISVILLE (June 17, 2009) – The Louisville chapter of the American Heart Association honored Louisville Metro EMS at their annual awards ceremony today, citing the program’s new heart attack care partnership as a crucial link in improving patient care.

“Louisville Metro EMS has helped to set Louisville apart from many major cities by working to create a system of care for heart patients that truly saves lives,” said Ron Alsup, State Health Alliance Director for AHA. “We’re lucky to have a progressive, innovative EMS system in our community that’s ready to push the envelope when it comes to improving patient care.”

The new partnership is designed to improve response for STEMI heart attacks (ST-segment elevation myocardial infarctions), which can block blood flow for long periods of time and damage large sections of heart muscle. EMS crews use mobile EKGs to diagnose heart attacks in the field and then wirelessly transmit them to the nearest hospital equipped to perform emergency balloon angioplasty. While the ambulance is en route, the hospital’s cardiac team will prepare for immediate treatment.

The partnership of LMEMS and six area hospital systems aims to shorten the time between ambulance arrival and treatment by EMS, and opening blocked arteries to the heart in the hospital cardiac catheterization lab.

The STEMI partnership created by LMEMS is built on guidelines established by AHA’s Mission: Lifeline program.

“We are dedicated to using the newest technology and the most innovative treatments to give cutting-edge emergency care to Louisville citizens,” said Dr. Neal Richmond, director of LMEMS. “We value the great support we have received from AHA as we launched this ambitious partnership.”

Dr. Richmond was recognized for his outstanding service as the Chair of Mission: Lifeline for AHA. Maj. Heather Palmer and Bob Ruhala were recognized by AHA as “Mission: Lifeline Partners.”