

News Release

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Subject: Kent Hospital, Warwick Fire Department and *ER Card*® now using groundbreaking software linkage for first responders and hospital emergency department; Rescue squad laptops can access patient medical data from *ER Card* before patient arrives at hospital.

Warwick, RI...Two area information systems companies have helped Kent Hospital and the Warwick Fire Department with a time-saving emergency medical information transmission program aimed at faster access to patient medical data by first responders and the hospital's emergency department. The new system was demonstrated at a joint news conference by the City of Warwick and Kent Hospital, in front of the hospital's new emergency department.

Using customized software and wireless computer technology, Warwick emergency medical technicians (EMTs) can immediately obtain medical information available through the *ER Card* ©, a computerized medical information card service introduced last year and now in the hands of about 150 Warwick residents. "Medications, allergies, chronic medical conditions, next of kin and medical providers are stored on the *ER Card* database," explained Maria Gil, vice president of Professional Records, Inc., the card's creator. "We started out with 24/7 access to this information by the hospital or doctor's office. It was a logical next step to enable EMTs in the field to directly access this vital data."

Kent Hospital Chief of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Robert Dinwoodie, said the new software sets another standard in the coordination of medical care. "Having access to critical patient information as early as possible greatly improves the working relationship between first responders and the hospital emergency department," he said. "The ability of EMTs to gain valuable time in assessing a patient's initial symptoms and conditions helps us to get care at the hospital started even faster on the patient's arrival."

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“The City of Warwick and Kent Hospital have always shared the goal of providing quality emergency medical care,” said Mayor Scott Avedisian. “This new partnership among the city, the hospital and ER Card allows us to enhance and improve the services we provide to our residents, while at the same time protecting their privacy, reducing costs and increasing efficiency.”

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The Warwick Fire Department had already begun using a new program called RIEMS Manager, developed by **Barrington-based ACK, Inc.** It allows EMTs to complete their field report on a laptop. “This software platform replaces the paper reports and provides for more accurate and complete field reporting. Information can then be sent to such recipients as the Department of Health, to a hospital or to their department headquarters using wireless transmissions,” explained ACK vice president Thomas Sweeney. “We have just added a secure link to the *ER Card* data base, allowing an EMT to directly access crucial patient information. This is especially important when a patient is unable to communicate, or in being able to triage (sort by level of needed care) patients in a mass casualty situation.”

Gil noted that this new system, if widely utilized, can save time and money, by reducing paperwork and billing costs through a more standardized medical record. “But, this really maximizes sharing of vital patient information among providers, while recognizing patient privacy issues, which is the overall goal of the *ER Card*,” she explained.

All Warwick Fire Rescue units are now equipped with on-board laptops, which EMTs use in the field to generate reports to the receiving hospital. “This is one more example of our desire to provide the best possible care to residents and visitors to our city,” said EMS Chief David Kurowski. “Last year alone, we had nearly 6300 rescue transports to Kent Hospital’s Emergency Department. In the future, as more people acquire the *ER Card*, the ability to quickly identify medications and previous conditions will help us to improve the quality of care we provide at the scene and our ability to turn our patients over to the hospital in an even more timely manner.”

Residents interested in acquiring an *ER Card* may get more information by calling 1-888-873-2673 or 822-1181.

END STORY

EDITORS, NOTE: Photo ops include use of field laptops by EMTs and transmission of information to hospital emergency department; reception of information in hospital ED.