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AMR Makes Service Strides in Buffalo

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AMR Western New York

For first responders, response times are critical. While spikes can occur, it's the day-to-day service that an operation's reputation hinges on. AMR's operation in Buffalo, N.Y., has been able to significantly improve its service in both situations.

In the past few years, AMR Buffalo has had issues meeting service requirements. When new leadership took over the operation, it was committed to putting a stop-gap in place and improving service, explained Thomas Maxian, Regional Director.

"The business philosophy of the previous leadership was to take any calls, even if it meant delaying response to an emergent call. They didn't understand how EMS worked and didn't empower regional directors to make suggestions for improvement," he said. "Now, under AMR, we're fully empowered and fully accountable."

To better meet the City of Buffalo's growing demand, the operation's leadership:

- Hired 120 employees since June 2016, significantly augmenting its staffing capabilities
- Added more unit hours to the schedule to meet call volume and spikes in demand
- Concentrated on providing better service to its core City of Buffalo clients and allowed other operations to cover calls on the fringe of the service area, improving efficiency
- Changed the physical layout of the operation into an open “newsroom” style configuration so everyone is in the same room now instead of “silod” in separate departments

Since making these improvements, the operation has reduced response times by 2 minutes in each of the following measurable categories: Advanced Life Support (ALS) Life Threatening, ALS Non-Life Threatening and Basic Life Support (BLS) Emergency. And, the operation has met all service requirements steadily for nine months, something the previous team had been unable to accomplish, according to Maxian.

However, the team’s resources were put to the test when it experienced an incredible surge in call volume between 16:30 and 17:30 May 10, 2017. In addition to the system-wide volume spikes the team often sees at that time of the day, Buffalo “exploded” with call volume, for no discernable reason.

“Dispatch literally gave us calls in clusters of three, four and even five at time,” recalled Maxian, who has been with AMR for four years. “Everyone on the team stepped up and delivered. Our folks in the field handled every call quickly and appropriately, while dispatch managed the influx with professionalism.”

Maxian said AMR’s fleet team had an ample number of cars available for oncoming crews and managers to enable the team to respond to the increase in demand. In fact, the team’s ability to deliver under pressure was recognized publically by several dispatchers.

“We’ve gotten spikes before, but nothing like this. At one point, we received 30 calls in a half-hour,” said Maxian, a 31-year veteran of the field. “Luckily the rest of the day was pretty normal.”

Now, the team knows what it’s capable of accomplishing in times of crisis – and times of continuity. And Maxian couldn’t be more proud of his team.

“We’ve been empowered to make changes that meet our client’s demands and truly save lives,” he said.





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