

Big Moments in EMS History

1966

The National Academy of Sciences landmark report, "Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society" sounds the alarm about deaths from motor vehicle accidents on the nation's highways, and the lack of an organized medical response system.

1967

Freedom House Ambulance Service is founded to serve Pittsburgh's African American community. Freedom House helps lay the foundation for paramedic services nationwide.

1972



The TV Show "Emergency!" premieres, inspiring a generation of paramedics.

1973

The EMS Systems Act provides federal funding to establish regional EMS systems throughout the country. Many EMS personnel are experienced medics returning from Vietnam.

1975



The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians is founded.

1979

The first 911 call was made in the late 1960s. By 1979, one-quarter of the U.S. population has access to it. Access grows rapidly in the 1980s.

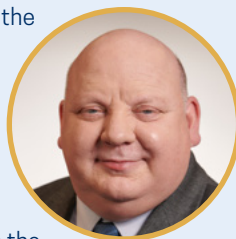
1983

Dr. Norman McSwain, a trauma surgeon and EMS champion from Tulane University School of Medicine, develops Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS).



1980s

We didn't have a lot of the science behind why we were doing what we were doing. We were delivering good care, but it wasn't necessarily evidence-based. It was based on the physician's opinion of what we should be doing. I think we are better now. Accreditation for education programs has been a big win for our profession.



What has remained the same is the people. People still get into EMS for the right reasons. They want to help people. I absolutely would not trade one single day of this for any other job. I have been blessed with having the best teachers in the world, who help me understand what I don't know. I continue to learn every single day.

DAVID FILIPP
Paramedic Program Director
UCLA Center for Prehospital Care

1988

Dr. Jeff Clawson develops the Medical Priority Dispatch System to triage 911 call urgency and establishes the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch.

1984



Congress establishes the EMS for Children program to focus on care for pediatric patients.

2010s

My parents were refugees from Vietnam. Knowing I had to navigate my parent's trauma from war at a very young age, I felt very equipped to know how to deal with other people's trauma and provide compassion and empathy. That is really what drives me.

A lot of the innovations we do in EMS came from the Vietnam War, and that touches me personally. The 50th anniversary of EMS Week for me is almost in correlation to the 50th anniversary of my parents coming over here looking for a new life. To see the legacy that we are



PIERRE LONG HUY NGUYEN
EMT and Firefighter
Travis County EMS District 8, TX
Austin City Council candidate

creating, and how far we have come as medical professionals. We are being recognized as more than ambulance drivers and that is such a great thing to be able to celebrate.

1992

The first National EMS Memorial Service is held in Virginia.

1997

36 states permitted EMTs to use AEDs in 1994. By 1997, nearly all states did.

Late 1990s

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) in the field becomes standard of care, reducing the need for intubations.

2020



EMS practitioners are celebrated as heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2015

NAEMT launches Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) to prepare EMS to respond to the growing number of active shooters.



2010

EMS established as a medical subspecialty for emergency physicians.

2009

Community paramedic programs launch in Eagle County, CO, Fort Worth, TX, and Wake County, NC.

2004

Pit crew CPR pioneered at University of Arizona.

2001



9/11 terrorist attacks kill 343 FDNY firefighters and eight EMTs and paramedics.

2021

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issues a temporary waiver allowing Medicare payments for treatment in place (TIP) or transport to alternate destinations (TAD).

2020s

I recently started working as a community paramedic. It's a different approach, where you get to spend more time with people. We encounter a lot of individuals who are not able to have those basic needs met as far as health care, so we find those resources for them.



With the older population, sometimes they just feel lonely. I take time to speak to them, and see how their emotional health is, as well as their treatment. It gives them someone who will listen, who cares about what they are going through so they don't feel as overwhelmed.

I absolutely love the job, every aspect of it. It gives you experiences like no other job – the relationships you have with coworkers and the impact you get to have on your community. Right now we have the community paramedicine. In the future, who knows what it might branch out into."

GUADALUPE CRUZ
Community Paramedic
Brownsville Fire Department, TX