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SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council (Trauma Service Area Q)

Austin, Colorado, Fort Bend, Harris, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller and Wharton Counties

For Life's Sake Advises Calling 911 at First Sign of Serious Illness or Injury



Less than half of people experiencing a medical emergency in Harris and eight surrounding counties arrive at the hospital by ambulance. The majority of patients with life-threatening needs are losing valuable treatment time when 911 isn't called for emergency medical services.

The SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) has launched the *For Life's Sake* regional public education initiative to encourage timely calls to 911 for emergency medical care and to improve outcomes for people experiencing signs of a heart attack or stroke, serious injury after a fall, or other needs that can lead to long-term debilitation or even death.

“In an emergency, every second matters,” says Darrell Pile, CEO of SETRAC. “Not taking warning signs seriously, delaying a call to 911 while waiting to see if symptoms pass, or choosing to drive yourself to the hospital, puts your opportunity for best outcomes at risk.”

The expert knowledge of paramedics and the equipment they carry means lifesaving medical care begins as soon as EMS arrives. This is especially important during a heart attack or stroke. Of the more than 795,000 people who have a stroke each year, about 75 percent are first occurrences and there is a greater chance of preventing long-term disability and death if medication for dissolving blood clots is administered within three hours of the first signs of stroke. For heart attacks, the treatment window is just 90 minutes for minimizing potentially lethal tissue damage.

For Life's Sake also calls attention to the ability paramedics have for identifying life-threatening injuries after a fall and why calling for emergency medical care right away can reduce the potential for experiencing the long-lasting effects of injury, chronic pain or death.

“Falls are the most common cause of trauma-related hospital admissions and the number one cause of death in adults 65 and older,” says Pile. “Serious, even life-threatening damage from a fall may go unnoticed for hours, from a hairline fracture or a serious head injury with subtle onset, to a broken hip, internal bleeding, or worse. We're not just concerned about older adults—anyone who falls on a hard surface or from any height has the potential for serious injury.”

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A public that appreciates and acts quickly to seek the expertise paramedics provide as well as the extraordinary capabilities of our hospital teams, is the goal of SETRAC's *For Life's Sake* initiative.

Know the Signs

Heart Attack

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Lightheadedness, nausea or vomiting
- Pressure or pain in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweats

Stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness in face, arm or leg, especially on one side
- Confusion or slurred speech
- Blurry vision
- Dizziness, loss of balance or trouble walking
- Severe headache

Fall Injury

- Severe or lingering pain
- Headache
- Obvious Swelling
- Ringing in the ears
- Dizziness or loss of balance

To learn more about SETRAC and its 27-year history of uniting emergency and healthcare systems to provide fully integrated medical response for everyday emergencies and disaster events, as well as analysis of member reported data and shared outcomes that continually implement lifesaving emergency protocols, go to SETRAC.org.

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The SouthEast Texas Regional Advisory Council (SETRAC) is a nonprofit coalition of medical providers and responders working together to improve health outcomes and coordinate emergency medical response across a nine-county service area.