

Simon: New Year, New Law to Assist Emergency Responders

Written by Ted Nelson
Monday, 06 January 2014 09:37

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SPRINGFIELD – January 3, 2014. Emergency medical technicians (EMTs) will ring in the New Year with the ability to provide more patient services under a new law backed by Lt. Governor Sheila Simon and recently approved by Governor Pat Quinn. Sponsored by Rep. Don Moffitt (R-Gilson) and Sen. Chapin Rose (R-Champaign), the legislation aims to enable Illinois EMTs to better provide potentially lifesaving services during emergency calls.

“This measure can help make sure EMTs are able to use all of their skills and training to save lives,” said Simon, chair of the Governor’s Rural Affairs Council. “Thanks to the hard work and leadership of Rep. Moffitt and Sen. Rose, we can celebrate the new year with an important new law.”

Ambulance services can be delivered at various levels, ranging from basic life support to advanced life support and specialty care transport. Currently, EMTs may provide services only at their assigned ambulance level, even though they may have individual training to provide a higher level of service. Under House Bill 2778, a licensed EMT may perform medical services compliant with his or her level of education or training, regardless of the level of their ambulances.

The legislation is a result of recommendations released by the House Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Task Force. Simon testified in support of streamlining regulations for EMTs and hosted an EMS Summit in Springfield in October. A number of providers gathered to discuss ways to further improve EMS delivery in Illinois.

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“This legislation will potentially raise the level of emergency medical service that may be provided by a rural volunteer ambulance service from EMT Basic up to a Paramedic response. This increased level of medical care will improve the chances of saving more lives. I commend Governor Quinn for signing this legislation into law,” said Moffitt. “The more we can do to enhance the level of care provided by volunteer ambulance services, the more lives will be saved.”

“HB 2778 is intended to provide life saving advanced care to citizens and visitors to rural areas,” said McLean County Area EMS System Director Greg Scott. “The Governor’s Rural Affairs Council, chaired by Lt. Governor Sheila Simon, the American Heart Association, the Illinois EMS Alliance, and the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois were all instrumental in the development of this legislation and was sponsored by Representative Don Moffitt and Senator Chapin Rose.”

Simon recently toured the Rockford Health System EMS building, met with the Rockford Fire Department and Win-Bur-Sew Fire Protection District, and visited the Jackson County Ambulance Service in Carbondale to learn more about the challenges faced and work done by local EMS providers.

Lt. Governor Simon is the chair of the Governor’s Rural Affairs Council, and enhancing emergency medical services is a part of the council’s strategic plan for rural Illinois.

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