



**For Immediate Release: May 26, 2017**

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**Vermont Honors its Emergency Medical Service Responders**  
*Celebrating National EMS Week*

BURLINGTON – For National Emergency Medical Services Week and throughout the summer, communities around the state are honoring the more than 2,800 neighbors, friends and family members who stand at the ready as Vermont’s emergency medical service providers.

Governor Phil Scott officially kicked off this year’s celebration with a proclamation declaring May 21 – 27, 2017 as EMS Week. Locally, many of the state’s nearly 175 EMS agencies are holding events, including several squads opening their doors for the public to check out the equipment used in emergencies, and to get a first-hand look at what emergency medical technicians do.

Vermont Emergency Medical Services Chief Dan Batsie said it’s difficult to underestimate the contribution EMS providers make to their communities. “Vermont’s EMS personnel are an incredibly dedicated cadre of professionals and volunteers,” Batsie said. “They work 24/7 to promote and protect public health in ways ranging from conducting infant and child car seat safety checks, to working with older Vermonters about fall prevention, to responding to individual and community emergency situations,” said Batsie. “There are many people with us today who know first-hand the life and death difference EMS responders make.”

The State of Vermont is also honoring several individuals and EMS agencies for their outstanding efforts and commitment to service:

- **2017 Vermont EMS Lifetime Award:** Robert Backus, MD
- **Advanced Life Support Provider of the Year:** Michael Condon, Bennington Rescue Squad
- **Ambulance Service of the Year:** Hartford Fire Department

- **Basic Life Support Provider of the Year:** Michael “Bucky” Thompson, Manchester Rescue Squad
- **EMS Educator of the Year:** Mariah Whitcomb, First Aid Squad of Thetford
- **EMS for Children Champion:** Gregory Gould, Winhall Police and Rescue
- **First Responder Service of the Year:** First Aid Squad of Thetford

Dr. Robert Backus is being recognized with the 2017 Vermont EMS Lifetime Award for his hands-on EMS involvement and support during 40 years of medical practice serving the Windham County/West River Valley area. Based out of Grace Cottage Hospital, Dr. Backus played a critical role in building EMS capacity in the area, and is widely regarded for never hesitating to leap into action to render aid.

With many EMS units in Vermont made up of volunteers, the Health Department encourages people to visit [OnCallforVT.org](http://OnCallforVT.org) to learn more about serving their communities as an emergency medical technician or as a member of the Medical Reserve Corps.

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