

Friday Night [under the] Lights 2014



Happy Friday.

I hope all is well in your World this week. Thanks for all the kind comments last week (including every imaginable distortion of my food analogy).

I have to tell you. The best response, by far, came from Larry Johnson [Houston AMR].

He wrote and said he enjoyed the Epilogue about the new movie “Constipation”. To learn more, he tried to sign on to the website “constipation.com”. Unfortunately, he noted, it was hard to log out (these are people we trust to protect our communities, folks...).

And, how could I forget this one last week? *If you stare really hard at the cool, wrapped MedicWest ambulance, you’ll see an Elvis in the foreground.*



Leave it to our Las Vegas colleagues. They’ve created the world’s first Compression-Only Elvis...

He’s all shook up.

AMR wins the Silver Stevie Award for the CPR World Challenge!

On June 13, Ted Van Horne [AMR President] announced that AMR was selected as a silver award winner in the 12th Annual American Business Awards in the category of “Corporate Social Responsibility Program of the Year - More Than 2,500 Employees” for the 2013 AMR World CPR Challenge. This achievement was only possible because of the hard work everyone put in last year to teach 54,884 people how to save lives. *More than 3,300 companies of all sizes and industries were nominated so being selected as the silver winner is pretty significant.*

The cool keeps getting cooler. Strong work. It’s nice when business recognizes the importance of clinical efforts. Our entire profession should be proud of this.



A sea of IV fluid...

So, last week, I asked you to take a stab at how much IV fluid AMR uses in a year (the data we have is for 2013)... Thanks to David Twiss [AMR National Procurement] for providing us with the “I had no idea...” data.

So here we go ...

In 2013, AMR dispensed 458,797,446 ml of IV Fluids. In case you’re trying to make that relevant, that’s how much water 664 average size adults would drink in an entire year (Wikipedia School of Medicine).

Our closest guestimate (and winner of a few of those milliliters of Starbucks coffee), is Robert Vaughan who guessed 36 Million mL (the high guess was 5 Billion, the low was 13.7 Million).

Either way, we use a ton of IV fluids in a year.

Here’s to your kidneys...

Care when no one’s looking...

I’ve always believed that one of the best indicators of a person’s integrity, commitment, sense of caring and compassion is what they do *when no one’s looking*. They do something that they expect no one else will see – they’ll get no praise (or for that matter, no complaints, or concerns) and they do it because they feel it’s the right thing to do at the time.

What I really love is to see how some people react when a situation may be confusing, or tough, or mundane, or even repulsive or offensive. What people do *when no one's looking* is a direct reflection of what they're made of...

I also strongly believe that people have the power to dramatically change a situation from simply routine, mundane, boring, or even nasty, into a memorable, positive event. When that happens *when no one's looking*, it's a true reflection of their integrity, love of life and their ability to make a memory with no expectation of personal reward.

If you're reading this, chances are you've chosen to work in a profession or position that either directly or indirectly deals with people who experience sudden, often unpredictable medical events. Or they may have a long term, chronic medical challenge they struggle with every day. Or they may be older, infirm and depend on others to help them make it through even the simplest of tasks.

In EMS and Emergency Medicine, when we meet these patients, there's a little greater likelihood that they'll have higher acuity problems. As a matter of fact (as you well know), many of us migrate purposefully to those types of situations and away from the lower acuity stuff (stab wound or UTI? – which would the rest of you adrenalin junkies choose?).

But one of the true merits of our profession is that we take care of all-comers. In addition to the high-intensity conditions, we care for many, many patients that are not as acute – Frankly, they may seem “routine” – not in need of any specific time sensitive interventions, but they need our care nonetheless. They call on us to help with something they can't provide themselves – things that may seem small to us, but are a huge part of our patient's lives. Like Inter-Facility Transports. Or help with simple activities of daily living. Or because they're scared or lonely.

We can make a tremendous impact on these people and their families as well.

While the diseases or injuries or impairments are well within our wheelhouse to care for, our patients also need us to help manage the emotional and personal implications of their current state of health (or technically, non-health). When people are sick or injured or chronically impaired, there is a powerful emotional component associated with the physiological or anatomical abnormality. It may be anxiety, fear, depression, a feeling of loss of control, despair or even just plain apathy.

That's why it's so important for us to pay attention to our patient's emotional state as well as their physical problems. We can help make them better (even when no one's looking).

Case in point. Ever been out in public and someone runs up to you, is genuinely excited, says hello, asks how you are and profusely thanks you for something, says “good to see you” and moves on (of course, you turn to your wife or husband and say “I have no idea who that was, honey” – and they understand immediately)?

Chances are, you did something for them that they will never, ever forget at a time when they needed it. To you, it was probably just another patient in a long list of patient's you've cared for at some time, in some situation, somewhere, for something ... that you'll never remember.

But they will. They did.

So when caregivers do something really impressionable *when no one's looking*, it really does change lives. And when that happens, it reminds us just how important what we do is, and how much our patient's emotions matter (*even when no one's looking*).

So, now it's my duty to expose a few of our colleagues who thought *no one was looking* – But alas, someone was. And they got caught.

Not only is what our colleagues did impressive, but the fact that in each of these situations, a loved one or a staff member took the time to write to someone about it should emphasize the impact that it had.

I also took the liberty of highlighting one line in each story that I think sums up the emotional impact of the moment...

To start, this is a note from a family member passed along by Chuck Babson [New Haven AMR] (who, I need to tell you, can't walk through a crowd anywhere he goes without a gaggle of people coming up to him – people literally flock to him – and it's not to get safe driving tips, I can assure you):

Good evening – I just wanted to take a moment to recognize a few of your staff members for the dedication and compassion they displayed today. My dad is a patient at Jefferson House and needed to be transported to St. Francis Hospital for testing. Dad is a 79 year old stroke patient and besides being paralyzed on his right side, he is unable to communicate verbally. He was accompanied to the appointment by my 83 year old mom.

My mom called me as soon as she arrived home literally gushing about the care the team of Chrislei Deyulla and Brandon Getty had given my dad preparing him for the ride, ensuring he was comfortable en route, getting him to his appointment on time and returning him to Jefferson House and to bed for his afternoon nap. Since my dad had his stroke on March 23, 2013, there have been few times that we as a family have encountered kindness, compassion, dignity and respect in his care. For the short time Chrislei and Brandon were with him today, their care of him made him feel "normal" and positively impacted his demeanor for the rest of the day.

Even more, it was comforting and reassuring to my mom who told me "they took care of everything – I didn't have to worry at all."

You should know that my mom offered these young people a "tip" for their exceptional service which they declined. On behalf of our family, we really cannot say "thank you" enough to them – they have found their calling in life. Please let them know they really are making a difference for the patients they serve and are wonderful ambassadors for your organization.

Kind regards –

Lynn

And then here's a note from Tom Maxian [Ohio / New York AMR], (one of the most talented writers and communicators I have encountered in many years, btw) about a family member that called him after a patient died:

As many of you likely know already, one of our long-time patients, Janet passed away this week. Janet's mom called to deliver the sad news and to thank us for our many years of service to Janet and her family. From all accounts, Janet had a robust personality, vibrant spirit, and incredibly positive attitude. Several of you have relayed stories about Janet and made very clear how much she endeared herself to all of you. While Janet seemed to admire all of you who provided her with care and transportation, it seems that Janet had a special place in her heart for Doston Jones. It is obvious that Doston was as fond of Janet as she was of him. The fact that Janet's mom, in spite of the anguish of losing her daughter at the young age 46, called us to express thanks demonstrates the impact that all of you had on Janet and her family. Nothing demonstrates better than this the absolute truth that EMS is a profoundly human endeavor. An incredible thank you to everyone who cared for Janet and remained sharply focused on the importance of establishing human connections with our patients. Truly outstanding. The hyperlink below will take you to Janet's obituary, which contains information about her services and we will ask Diana Phillips, our Ambassador of Sunshine, to send flowers on our behalf.

http://www.waitefuneralhome.com/fh/obituaries/obituary.cfm?o_id=2342566&fh_id=11203

And finally, from Bill Schietinger [Bridgeport AMR] (who, I will tell you did a masterful job working with his colleagues in helping to "reinvigorate" the Connecticut EMS Conference a few weeks ago) – This one will grab your heart, I promise... It's about a new Paramedic preceptee, Rob:

I am a Social Worker at Westport Healthcare Center. This morning following our morning rounds, we could hear beautiful piano music coming from the lobby. As we rounded the corner, we saw many of our residents gathered around the piano with your driver Robert George playing. As he waited for our elevator, he had seated himself and spontaneously filled our nursing home with laughter and grace. People came from the therapy and treatment rooms to hear him play and sing the two songs he was able perform for us.

Typically we curse our slow elevator, but today we thought it much too fast. He couldn't stick around so we could thank him (other than a short applause session) so I am writing in hopes that he can be formerly recognized for bringing joy to so many of us.

On this dark and rainy morning, your employee went above and beyond by immeasurable degrees. He offered his extraordinary talent and humor to our workplace and to the residents who come to us for short term rehabilitation and choose us for their home. He brought intense sunshine to our lobby and hearts and we couldn't be more grateful.

Very Best Regards, Sue

So there you have it.

To Chrislei, Brandon, Rob & Doston. We know what you're made of and someone caught you when you thought *no one was looking*.

I love working with people like this. Doing something so remarkably well isn't just great in medicine, it's a fantastic way to live your life.

Congratulations to Dr. Bryan Bledsoe (MedicWest Medical Director)

I have a little catching up to do on the news (as we discussed last week). This actually happened in January at EMS Today...

Dr. Bryan Bledsoe received the 2014 John P. Pryor Award in Washington, DC.

The award recognizes Dr. Bledsoe's exemplary service to the field of emergency medicine and, specifically, emergency medical services (EMS). Bryan has been intimately involved in EMS for 40 years as a paramedic, educator, and EMS physician. He is a prolific textbook author with over 1 million textbooks in print worldwide. His work and writings have aided millions of EMS providers and an untold number of ill or injured patients.

Bryan is also a researcher, educator, and popular speaker who continually challenges EMS providers to question doctrine and seek new evidence-based ways of improving patient care and outcomes. He is passionate about tough issues and has never been afraid to stare controversy right in the face (nose to nose at that).

The Award is named in honor of John Pryor, MD, also a former paramedic. He was a trauma surgeon at the University of Pennsylvania and after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he joined to Army Reserves to help care for wounded soldiers near the battlefields of Iraq. On Christmas Day of 2008, in Iraq for a second tour of duty, John Pryor was killed when an enemy mortar round exploded nearby. He was 42-years-old.

Also, in 2008, the American College of Emergency Physicians named Bryan a "Hero of Emergency Medicine". In that same year, he was recognized as a "Hero of Health and Fitness" by Men's Health magazine. And in 2011, he was named "Faculty of the Year" by the University of Nevada School of Medicine Emergency Medicine Residency program.

Congratulations, Bryan. *Well deserved.*

Remember - we work for our communities...

Recognition in the media for an EMS system is an important measure of performance, perception, expectation and community citizenship. Both of these Practices have worked extraordinarily hard to earn the high five. *Hats off...*



This screenshot shows a news article on The Commercial Appeal website. The article is titled "New Shelby County ambulance service is delivering" and is written by Linda A. Moore. It was posted on October 25, 2013, at 4:28 p.m. and updated on October 26, 2013, at 12:05 a.m. The article text states: "Shelby County officials say after three months in operation, American Medical Response, the county's new ambulance service, is performing ahead of expectations." The website header includes navigation links like "Login", "Manage Account", and "Mobile", and a search bar powered by Yahoo! Search.



This screenshot shows a news article on the Napo Valley Register website. The article is titled "AMR given high marks for ambulance response" and features a photograph of several red and white ambulance vans. The website header includes navigation links like "Home", "Opinion", "Entertainment", and "Sports", and a search bar. The article text is partially visible, mentioning "American Medical Response received praise from county officials for their services in Napo County, Va. Source: Register file photo."

Epilogue...

Tonight's Epilogue is courtesy of Tim Dorn [AMR CFO/COO].

Finally – *The question is answered.*



And, on a side note – Remember early in the Healthcare reform debates, Nancy Pelosi said “We have to pass it, to find out what’s in it”?

A physician called into a radio show and said: “that’s the definition of a stool sample” ...

I guess we’ll have to wait & see what the lab finds in it...

That’s it from my world. *Happy Friday.* As always, thanks for what you do and how you do it (especially when no one’s looking)...

Ed

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