



Wheeling Fire Department
Public Information Office
2126 Market Street
Wheeling, WV 26003
Phone: (304) 234-3732
wheelingwv.gov/fire

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2020

WFD Receives Lifeline EMS Gold Plus Recognition Award

For the fifth consecutive year, the Wheeling Fire Department has earned an American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline® EMS Award. This year, WFD earned the highest honor possible- **Gold Plus**, one of few department and organizations to do so in the state of West Virginia.

WFD was awarded **Gold Plus** for implementing high quality improvement measures for the treatment of patients who experience severe heart attacks.

This is not the first year the Wheeling Fire Department has been recognized by the American Heart Association. The department earned the AHA's gold award in 2018 and 2019, silver in 2017 and bronze in 2016.

"It is not an easy task to meet these criteria set forth by the American Heart Association," said Fire Chief Larry Helms. "Every day, our team continues exceed these standards of quality care to meet this exceptional level of recognition. I am very proud of our firefighters/paramedics."

Every year, more than 250,000 people experience an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) the deadliest type of heart attack caused by a blockage of blood flow to the heart that requires timely treatment. To prevent death, it is critical to restore blood flow as quickly as possible, either by mechanically opening the blocked vessel or by providing clot-busting medication.

WFD's highly trained EMT's and paramedics play a vital role in treating heart attacks and serve as the first medical point of contact. They can save precious minutes of treatment time by activating the emergency response system that alerts hospitals to an incoming heart attack patient.

Additionally, the Wheeling Fire Department's early activation can give the patient the opportunity to bypass the emergency department and instead go to a specialized department of the hospital, like the Cardio Cath Lab. This way, the hospital is better prepared for the patient.

The Mission: Lifeline initiative provides tools, training, and other resources to support heart attack care following protocols from the most recent evidence-based treatment guidelines. Mission: Lifeline's EMS recognition program recognizes emergency medical services for their efforts in improving systems of care to rapidly identify suspected heart attack patients, promptly notify the medical center and trigger an early response from the awaiting hospital personnel.