

THE LOWDOWN

Sheriff Charles S. Blackwood

Physical trauma is the leading cause of death for people aged one through 46, and it accounts for 30% of all deaths. Many traumatic injuries can cause death within three to six minutes. However, on average, emergency medical service providers arrive on scene between seven and 14 minutes after the trauma occurs. When seconds matter, this delay represents a dangerous gap.

Deputies usually arrive to a scene first, but even when the ambulance reaches the scene before deputies, medical providers cannot begin to render aid until law enforcement officers mitigate the danger, control traffic hazards, or conduct a security sweep of the premises.

Deputies receive CPR and first aid training during a week-long block of instruction during Basic Law Enforcement Training. Although reasonably comprehensive, this education does not begin to compare to the training, experience, and equipment paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMT) bring to a scene. Until last month, deputies arrived at a scene with a rapid response first aid kit. This compact, lightweight kit is likely better than the first aid supplies most community members have in their residences or vehicles, but at a cost of less than \$65.00, it pales in comparison to the skills of a paramedic or EMT and the supplies onboard an ambulance!

I wanted to increase the quality of medical care deputies could provide to victims while they waited for more comprehensively trained people with better equipment to arrive on scene. Therefore, I recently purchased 31 portable trauma and emergency medical response kits from Zoll Medical. Called Mobilize kits, these have an Android tablet built-in to the lid of the carrying case. The tablet is preloaded with an instructional rescue app that launches when someone lifts the lid. The kits also have medical supplies clearly labeled, logically organized, and color-coded to match the instructions in the rescue app. In other words, the Mobilize kits are designed to fill the gap between the occurrence of the trauma and the arrival of advanced emergency medical personnel. The kit and the onboard app help deputies and even bystanders with no training at all assess, manage, and monitor medical emergencies, potentially providing lifesaving care. The faster care can be provided, the better the chance of a successful outcome.

I am pleased to report that Corporal Doug Moats successfully saved a life during the week he first took possession of a Mobilize kit. He responded to a shots fired call and

found a victim with multiple gunshot wounds, including two sucking chest wounds (one with an exit wound) and severe facial trauma. Moats placed three chest seals on the victim, and properly managed the facial injuries until emergency medical providers arrived several minutes later.

While treating the victim, Moats realized another benefit of the kit. With his level of prior training (which is greater than most of my deputies have), he was able to use the kit as a well-stocked supply cabinet; he did not need to follow the instructions from the app. Had there been an additional victim, an untrained family member or bystander could have simultaneously rendered care to that person by following the step-by-step assessment questions and treatment instructions embedded in the app; these use protocols and best practices as set by the American Heart Association, Tactical Emergency Casualty Care, and the American College of Surgeons. In other words, the kit is useful to people almost without regard to the level of knowledge they bring to the emergency.

Reflecting on the experience, Deputy Moats related that people keep telling him he saved a life, but he does not feel his efforts were anything extraordinary. Although the hospital trauma doctor told the paramedic supervisor the chest seals Moats placed saved the victim's life, Moats explained that having those seals quite literally at his fingertips is what made the save possible.

Every deputy on patrol will eventually have the Mobilize system in his or her vehicle and we are purchasing 14 more kits to put in other strategic areas throughout the county. We will familiarize other first responders and the leaders of area businesses and non-profits with information about the kits and their locations. The kits are so intuitive, an 8th grader can use them, rendering care and providing a trauma victim with the precious time he or she needs need to survive until emergency medical service providers arrive.

I am confident these kits will continue to save lives. Please come by the office if you would like to familiarize yourself with a Mobilize trauma kit.

