

Green County EMS, Inc. Operational Overview

About Us:

Green County EMS, Inc., (GCEMS) located in Monroe, Wisconsin, was founded in 1974 as a private non-profit volunteer community service organization. GCEMS was created with the intention of being a self-supporting entity, serving the city of Monroe and the surrounding area. Therefore, GCEMS receives no local government funding, is not a tax-based service and is only funded through donations and service fees. The fleet consists of two Type III ambulances (Ford Chassis with a Horton box), both equipped with state-of-the-art emergency equipment. GCEMS provides advanced life support since moving to the EMT-Intermediate level in August 2001.

Our Purpose:

The purpose of GCEMS shall be to establish, staff, and maintain an emergency ambulance service for Monroe, Wisconsin, and environs. GCEMS does not routinely provide non-emergency service. This corporation is organized as a social welfare organization intended to qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. In 2001, GCEMS became a component of the Monroe Fund, which qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) for donation purposes.

Our Mission:

Green County Emergency Medical Service, Inc. is an organization committed to provide pre-hospital care to the City of Monroe and the surrounding area. We staff and maintain an emergency ambulance service to provide pre-hospital care for people in need, without discrimination based on gender, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, creed, or socioeconomic level. We recognize people as individuals and treat them with respect and sincerity. We recognize the importance of volunteers and the importance of support from our community and surrounding areas. We value the importance of continuing education. We believe in providing care to our patients with passion, compassion, and professional competency.

Our Mission Statement:

Green County EMS, Inc., serves the public as a team of dedicated, compassionate, volunteer professionals by providing quality emergency care, education and community service.

About Our Service Area:

GCEMS responds to about 1100 calls per year and serves about 20,000 people. The GCEMS service area includes 7 villages: South Wayne, Browntown, Martintown, Clarno, Juda, Twin Grove, and Oakley, and the City of Monroe. Green County EMS serves both Green and

Lafayette counties, which covers 10 townships: Monroe, Wayne, Mt. Pleasant, Clarno, Jordan, Washington, Cadiz, Jefferson, Spring Grove, and Sylvester.

Our service area is made up of the city of Monroe, small little towns, and a large farming community. Rolling hills, woodlands, streams, rivers, and lakes are all a part of Green County. The name "Little Switzerland" is deep in Green County heritage. Green County was built by the farming community and is home to two large industries outside of the city limits - farming and cheese production. Many farms and cheese factories dot the landscape, no matter what route you choose to take. Farming injuries, throughout the year, are an unfortunate part of the "job".

There are two golf courses in our service area, an indoor roller skating rink, and an indoor ice arena. There are 17 parks/recreation areas designated in and around the city of Monroe, one that includes an outdoor swimming pool. Monroe has three fitness centers, Curves for Women, the Fitness Connection, and the YMCA, a 40,300 sq. ft. facility, which sits on 10-acres of land and includes an indoor 6-lane 25-meter pool.

Monroe, and the surrounding communities, hosts numerous events throughout the year, which pose a challenge to the EMS system. Some of the bigger events that take place in the City of Monroe and the surrounding area are: Cheese Days, Depot Days, Green County Breakfast on the Farm, Balloon Rally, Taste of Monroe, Dairy Days, Fourth of July Celebration, Badger Booster Days, Green County Fair, Maxwell Street Days, Monroe Fire School, Berghoff Blues Festival, Oktoberfest/Polkafest, and Swiss Fest. The surrounding communities hold many festivals as well; Browntown Summer Fest, New Glarus Heidi Festival & William Tell Festival, South Wayne Red Cracker Fest, citywide Garage Sales, Fourth of July Celebrations, Memorial Day Celebrations, and many other events too numerous to mention.

GCEMS is responsible for mutual aid to all the communities in its territory, and is on "standby" during many of the events, or is alerted if additional help is needed. GCEMS is requested to provide services (stand-by) at many events, including the Apostolate to the Handicap, events at the Green County Fair, triatholons, bikeathons, walkathons, 5K & 10K races, football games, hockey tournaments, and bike rodeos. GCEMS also hosts ambulance and facility tours to many youth groups, such as daycares, boy scouts, and girl scouts. GCEMS also participates in safety fairs and other elementary school programs.

Transportation:

GCEMS sits in the center of Green County. This unique position, along with operating two ambulances, affords us with the ability to receive and give mutual aid to surrounding communities and provide patients with excellent emergency care. GCEMS transports the majority of its patients to the Monroe Clinic Hospital ER. If the patient is too unstable to transport, an air ambulance service may be dispatched to the scene. Green County Sheriffs Department can dispatch one of many services: Med-Flight, which operates with two helicopters from UW Hospital, Madison; REACT from Rockford Memorial Hospital; Flight for Life from Milwaukee; and Lifeline from St. Anthony Hospital, Rockford. Although GCEMS transports patients primarily to The Monroe Clinic Hospital, we may be asked to transport patients to any of the following nine hospitals; Lafayette County Memorial Hospital, Darlington; Mercy Hospital, Janesville; Beloit Memorial Hospital, Beloit; any of 3 Rockford

(Illinois) Hospitals, (Saint Anthony's Medical Center, Swedish American, or Rockford Memorial) or any of the 3 Madison hospitals (Meriter, St. Mary's, or UW Hospital and Clinics). The University of Wisconsin Hospital and St. Anthony's Medical Center are Level One trauma centers, while the remaining hospitals are Level Three trauma centers.

While the majority of our patients are transported to the nearest facility to receive care as soon as possible, at times, patients are transported to other hospitals, depending on the physician's or patients' preference, or for a specific type of care needed. Normally, depending on the incident location, required rescue efforts, hospital destination, and road conditions, total time for patient care can vary from as little as 10 minutes to in excess of an hour or more. At times, by request, our crews have transported patients as far away as Milwaukee, Chicago, Iowa City or Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Medical Direction & Quality Assurance:

Dr. Christine Langemo is the EMS Medical Control Director at the Monroe Clinic Hospital for GCEMS. She has accepted the responsibility to assure that all physicians in the Monroe Clinic Emergency/Walk-in Care Department are familiar with the First Response, EMT-Basic and Intermediate Technician policies and procedures; as well as the roles and responsibilities of physicians providing on-line medical direction to the EMTs. One or two Emergency Room Physicians are always present (24/7) in the Emergency Room. In conjunction with the Medical Control Director, Mary Austin, EMS Coordinator within the EMS office of The Monroe Clinic, ensures quality assurance and continuing education.

The Monroe Clinic EMS Office maintains a record of attendance and skills performed by the EMTs in the field and in clinicals, training sessions, exams and recertifications. Run reports are reviewed monthly with special attention regarding runs that utilize advanced skills. GCEMS receives a run report review each month and statistics are entered into the monthly report form. The monthly report is used to evaluate all runs by and through this record. The EMTs' practice can be evaluated, any problems can be addressed immediately, and records can be used for continuing education or retraining. All run reports are delivered to the EMS Coordinator at The Monroe Clinic for review. The final reports are then given to Dr. Langemo for her review and signature.

Citizen Access & Communications:

The area served by GCEMS is equipped with the enhanced 911 emergency system. GCEMS calls are dispatched from the Green County Sheriff's Department. Access numbers in Green County are 911 or Green County Sheriffs Department at 328-9400.

Once an ambulance call comes into Green County Sheriffs Department Dispatch, and the location of the emergency determined, the ambulance service is alerted by a pager system. Members of GCEMS are each provided with a pager and those signed on for that shift of call respond by physically reporting to the ambulance station. When the full ambulance crew is present, the crews contact dispatch and inform them that the ambulance is in-service, ready and available. The ambulance then responds to the location of the emergency, and continuous contact between the ambulance, dispatch, medical control, and the receiving hospital, is maintained by radio or cellular phone.

GCEMS equips both ambulances with a mobile and portable radio, which allows for communication capabilities with multiple agencies, such as, Green County Sheriff, Dane County Sheriff, Monroe Police Department, and Green County Fire & First Response Departments as well as other area agencies. Radios and cell phones are used for communication between hospitals, dispatch, and Medical Control physicians.

Headquarters:

Our facility is privately owned by the Corporation but sits on City property. Per an original agreement, the land is leased for \$1 per year for 99 years. Over 50% of our members reside outside the required four-minute response time and remain at the station or near-by during their shift of call.

Due to space constraints and inadequate living & sleeping arrangements in the existing building, which was built in 1980, the building was renovated in November 2001. The project was totally funded by private donations and existing funds. A second story was added, which includes an office with five workstations, a spacious training room, an AV/training equipment storage room, a large conference room, a mechanical room, full-size kitchen, two bathrooms and a handicap accessible entrance. The first floor training area was remodeled to provide for three private sleeping quarters, a lounge with kitchenette, two bathrooms, a supply room, oxygen room, and laundry room. The ambulance bay doors were widened to accommodate modern larger ambulances.

Organizational Structure & Operations:

The membership of our organization consists of approximately 70 members, which are made up of approximately 50 EMT-Basics and Intermediate Technicians (some who are also RNs and Paramedics), EMT provisionals (trainees), and about 10 emergency vehicle operators (drivers who are not EMTs). Six affiliate members also make up part of our membership.

Affiliate members are licensed EMTs that are also members of and respond with an area ambulance service or first response unit that is located within the GCEMS service response area and medical control. Affiliate members are included on our roster so they may utilize their advanced EMT skills, maintain their EMT license, and operate as an EMT on our ambulance if needed. Affiliate members have no on-call duty requirements.

The four officer positions of the membership consist of the Assistant Service Director, Compliance Officer, Education/Training Officer, and the Equipment/Maintenance Officer. Only active members that have been on our service for three years or more are eligible to hold an officer position. Eligible members may apply for the officer positions, who are ultimately appointed by the Service Director.

The membership elects the ten-person Board of Directors. The Board is composed of five active members from the membership and five Community Advisors. Community Advisors are citizens of the community at-large (who are not otherwise affiliated with GCEMS) that are recruited to provide expertise and balance to the Board.

Revenue is obtained through private donations, fundraisers, grants, and service fees. The citizens and businesses of Monroe and surrounding communities have always given generously to support GCEMS, which has made it possible to maintain a high standard of readiness and quality of care. The Wisconsin Funding Assistance Program (a fund established by the State of Wisconsin for ambulance providers) is also used each year to help defray the costs for continuing education, conventions or other training events that members may attend throughout the year.

A local accounting firm is retained to prepare taxes and quarterly reports, etc. We also hire a firm that performs our billing and collections. A local attorney is retained to provide legal advice or services as needed.

Licensure, Training & Continuing Education:

The EMT members on GCEMS maintain licensure at the EMT-Basic and the Intermediate Technician level.

Continuing Education: After the initial training required to obtain an EMT license, there are several additional requirements in order to maintain licensure.

- AED Recertification: Completed twice every two years.
- CPR Recertification: Completed once every two years (GCEMS requires annual recertification)
- Combitube Airway: Completed twice every two years.
- Glucagon Administration: Completed twice every two years.
- Epinephrine Administration: Completed once every two years.
- Albuterol Administration: Completed once every two years.
- Advanced Skills: (IV, medication administration) 12 additional hours every two years
- Refresher Course: 30 hours completed every two years (Includes 4 hrs Terrorism awareness) as required by the State of Wisconsin.

Several other agencies, including federal agencies such as OSHA and Homeland Security, require mandatory training. These are: Incident Command System training, Hazmat Awareness; Bloodborne & Airborne Pathogens; and HIPAA (required for new hires and suggested annually thereafter). In an effort to maintain highly trained and skilled responders, GCEMS has additional training requirements such as EVOC, training on certain compliance type policies, new equipment or new procedures.

In turn, many of our members offer their expertise by teaching CPR, AED and First Aid courses to local organizations, schools, businesses, and the general public as well as participating as preceptors for EMS students during their field training through Blackhawk Technical College.

Member Retention and Rewards:

Studies show the average length of time EMTs stay in the business is five years. In addition to the stress of the job, like most people in today's world, our members must also sometimes juggle more than one job, family commitments, and other service organization commitments, among many others. Our members still find time to volunteer their time to ensure our community is provided 24/7 emergency medical service. In addition to ensuring that CISM (critical incident stress management) is provided to our members when needed, we strive to maintain programs that will retain our valuable resources – our members.

In order to show appreciation for their efforts, GCEMS provides many membership incentive programs, such as the point system and cash rewards for exceeding the required call hours. With the point system, members are awarded points for going above and beyond. Members may use their accumulated points towards EMS related activities or the purchase of EMS related equipment/apparel. Members are also given longevity awards, gifts during National EMS Week in May, the annual Christmas party, paid travel/lodging/tuition for EMS related continuing education (conferences, seminars, etc.), use of the exercise equipment, company supplied uniforms, and allowed reasonable use of the facilities for personal purposes (family events, washer/dryer, fax, copy machine, computers, etc.)

As a future goal, GCEMS also plans to participate in the Wisconsin Service Awards Program. The Service Award Program (formerly called the Length of Service Award Program, or LOSA) for volunteer fire fighters and emergency medical technicians was created by 1999 Wisconsin Act 105. The program operates under the direction of an eight-member board, appointed by the Governor, and establishes by rule a tax-deferred benefit program for volunteer fire fighters, first responders and emergency medical technicians. The Service Award Program is a recruitment and retention program that provides state matching funds to establish retirement accounts that are payable to members after 25 years of service or age 60.

Planning:

In April 2002, GCEMS underwent a strategic planning process due to the many state and national mandates that have forced many EMS organizations to evaluate their current way of functioning. During this process, participants identified key areas of future development.

Service Management was identified as a top priority. As is the case with many volunteer and paid on-call ambulance providers throughout Wisconsin, the continual increase of requirements as well as the demands on time has made it difficult for GCEMS to reach some of its goals. Many of the future challenges that the Board identified were requiring follow through, knowledge, information, and time to address issues and projects. Several options to address leadership were explored that included hiring a manager or service leader, recruiting business leaders from within the community, and developing leaders from within the organization. The most feasible and promising idea was to hire a full-time manager who would oversee the daily operations of the service.

In July 2003, GCEMS hired its first service director. Unfortunately, due to medical reasons, the service director resigned in December 2004. After further development and planning, the search began to fill the vacant service director position. In March 2006, the search

resulted in the hiring of a new service director, Dan Nufer, who assumed the role in May 2006.

Vision & Future Goals:

EMS is viewed as a standard, valuable community resource that must always be in place. The complexion of EMS is subject to change dramatically in some aspects. Nevertheless, continued expectations for service by the public and its chosen leaders will ensure that, in some form, EMS will continue to exist and serve the emergency medical needs of our community. An increasing proportion of the U.S. population is participating in health plans that compel patients to seek specific medical care providers and place a greater emphasis on prevention and health maintenance. As a result, GCEMS supports the Safe Communities, Safe Kids, and Safe America concepts. For the sake of the health of the communities that we serve, we will advocate injury and illness prevention through better education and public relations.

It is inevitable that the EMS industry and government mandates will continue to influence the way we operate, forcing change, and placing challenges upon a relatively small volunteer department. Although change can be intimidating, Green County EMS, Inc. accepts the challenge, will overcome adversity, and will continue to provide care in a professional and compassionate manner. We embrace the opportunity to “step outside the box”, by exploring innovative ways to achieve our mission, developing models for evaluation, and determining ways to cost-effectively deliver our services.