



# SANFORD AMBULANCE

Fargo

2022

Annual Report

# Director's Message



Tim Meyer  
*Senior Director of  
Emergency Services*

Thank you for taking the time to read Sanford Ambulance's 2022 Annual Report. Last year's report was our first publication of this type and we want to improve and refine the information provided. Many things were different in 2022 but many remained consistent with our 2021 report. Sanford Ambulance continues to be proud to serve the citizens of Cass County, North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota. We are still the largest ambulance service between Minneapolis and Seattle and we span counties in two states and multiple cities.

Workforce continues to be the greatest challenge for our ambulance service. During the pandemic, many people got out of the workforce, including those in EMS. The worker shortage within the community creates competition between professions as those in the workforce have many options for good jobs. We continue to develop strategies to lead people into the EMS professions.

Further in this document you see the stories of several team members at Sanford Ambulance. Their experiences show how an individual can progress through a career by having varied challenging and rewarding positions all within our organization. We are proud of their success and how their efforts improve EMS for the communities we serve.

You'll also find that Sanford Ambulance responded to fewer ambulance calls in 2022. Some of that volume shift was planned and intentional and some of it was related to coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our baseline was likely skewed during that period and seems to have normalized. As for the planned reduction, it primarily was due to two factors; we have fewer interfacility transfers to accommodate due to a closing of an inpatient unit at the Sanford Broadway Hospital and opening another inpatient unit at Sanford Medical Center Fargo. This resulted in less patients being transferred across town. The second factor is that Sanford Ambulance is no longer routinely dispatched to behavior health evaluations that the Fargo Police Department is responding to. These calls almost never result in a need for an ambulance and Fargo Police can request an ambulance response any time they feel there's a need.

As the Emergency Medical Services leader in our region, the things we do impact the entire region. We continue to train most of the paramedics in eastern North Dakota and west-central Minnesota. We look towards innovation and science to shape our future. We are also proud that we have been continually accredited since 2003 and we are beginning our planning for reaccreditation in 2024. During our most recent re-accreditation survey in 2021 we were described as being in the top 1% of all ambulance services in the United States. Our success is just one part of the great system we have in the Metro area.

Thanks again for learning about Sanford Ambulance's performance in 2022. We intend to continue towards intelligent growth to best serve the community with a commitment to high-performance ambulance operations and fiscally sound practices.

# 2022 COVID Report

Due to advances in vaccine technology, more effective treatments, and a growing population with immunity to the virus, the COVID-19 illness was less severe and less deadly than it was in 2020 and 2021. Although COVID was less of a disruption in our daily lives, it has permanently altered how EMS works. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Sanford Ambulance, along with EMS agencies across the nation, struggled through many challenges: workforce shortages due to sick and quarantined employees, the increased costs and shortages of essential medical supplies, and inadequate reimbursements to help mitigate the additional costs.

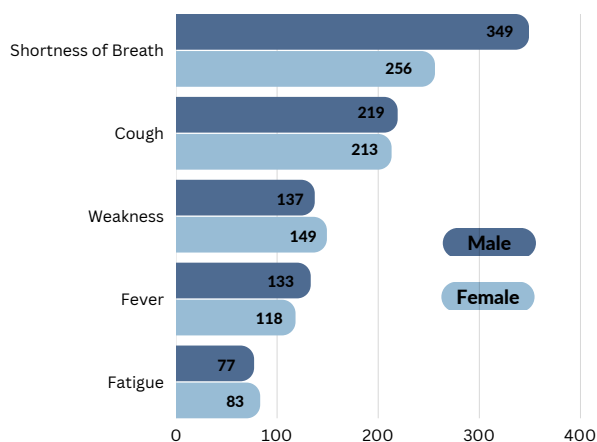
The following data shows how COVID-19 affected Sanford Ambulance in the year 2022.

## 485

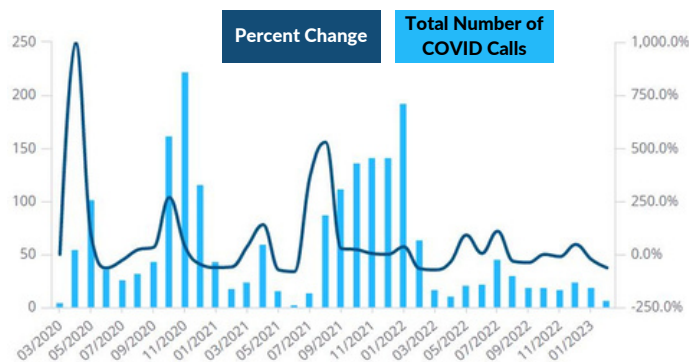
### Total COVID ambulance calls in 2022

<b>January</b>	193	<b>May</b>	21	<b>September</b>	19
<b>February</b>	64	<b>June</b>	22	<b>October</b>	19
<b>March</b>	17	<b>July</b>	46	<b>November</b>	17
<b>April</b>	11	<b>August</b>	31	<b>December</b>	25

### Symptoms Reported by Gender



### COVID Patients Call Volume Timeline



It is our hope that as medicine and technology continue to advance, COVID-19 continues to become less of a disruption in our lives, making it possible to continue pre-pandemic activities like traveling, attending large events, and being unmasked in public. We want the world to feel like they are getting back to normal, in 2023, and hopefully COVID-19 can be relegated to an important, but normal public health concern.



# 2022 Highlights



2022

## January

- Sanford Ambulance paramedics answered phones for the Sanford Children's Cares for Kids Radiothon.

2022

## February

- Sanford Ambulance was asked to teach our community how to perform hands-only CPR on the North Dakota Today TV show.

2022

## March

- A Sanford Ambulance Explorer was nominated and selected to help deliver a special report to North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum.
- The Fargo Forum featured an article about Sanford Ambulance's 2021 Annual Report

2022

## April

- The Sanford Ambulance Citizen's Lifesaving Award was presented to three Moorhead gas station employees for their assistance when a customer was experiencing a medical emergency.

2022

## May

- Sanford Ambulance paramedic Sondra Bergem was presented the Star of Life Award in Washington, DC. Sondra has been a paramedic at Sanford Ambulance for 25 years.



# 2022 Highlights



2022

**May**

- A community celebration was held in honor of EMS week. Crews were treated to a lunch from the Detroit Deli food truck.
- Sanford Ambulance assisted at the 18th annual Fargo Marathon. An incredible amount of planning goes into preparing for the Fargo Marathon each year. Fortunately, this year there were very few medical emergencies at the event.



2022

**June**

- Sanford Ambulance crews enjoyed some delicious Sandy's Donuts from the Salvation Army on National Donut Day.



2022

**October**

- A patient thanked Sanford Ambulance for their extra care and kindness when assisting her family.
- The Sanford Ambulance monster brought tricks and treats on Halloween.



2022

**December**

- Students got to check out the career options in EMS at the 2022 Health, Tech & Trades Career Expo at the Fargodome.
- Sanford Ambulance rang bells to help raise money for the Salvation Army.
- A grand opening celebration was held for the new ambulance post in West Fargo.

## Employee Highlight:

# Justin Roggenkamp

When most people think about getting into the Emergency Medical Services field, they think that every call they respond to will be a life-and-death situation, just like most of the medical dramas that they see on TV. However, as Sanford Ambulance EMT Justin Roggenkamp has learned, the over-dramatized experiences of EMTs and paramedics on TV, which are meant to entertain, don't truly reflect the realities of those who work in the field.

Justin's first impression of EMS was that most of the work dealt with traumatic accidents and cardiac arrests. He soon learned that EMS is a lot different than depicted on TV. "EMS involves so much more than the critical calls – it involves mental health emergencies, nursing home patients, and even 'regulars' that call for an ambulance multiple times in a short timeframe." Justin explains that shortly after starting his EMS career, he realized that the term 'emergency' is fairly subjective – just because some people might not consider a medical problem a serious issue, it doesn't mean that others shouldn't.

2018

**911 EMT**

2022

**Charge EMT (NEAT)**

2022

**Paramedic School**

2023

**Goal: Paramedic**

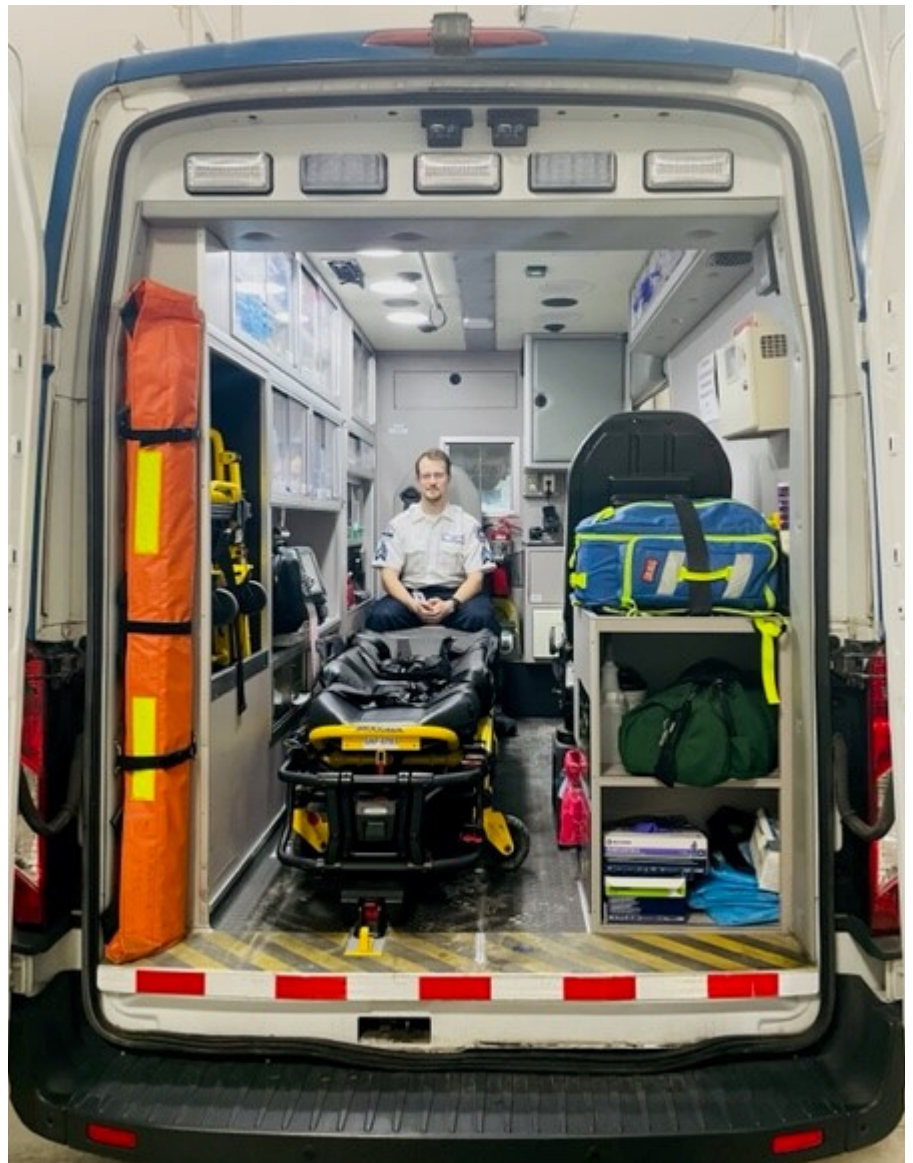
Justin's father was actually the person who suggested that he look into a career in the EMS field. Justin was looking for a career with unpredictability; a job where each day was guaranteed to be different. He also wanted to pursue a career that would teach him something useful that he could use outside of work. Justin's dad suggested that he get his EMT certification, and while doing that, he could get a better idea of what a career in EMS would be like.

Justin completed his EMT training through Sanford Health EMS Education in 2018. He knew that he wanted to work as an EMT before deciding what the next step in his career was, so he started working at Sanford Ambulance, responding to 911 calls as an EMT. After seeing firsthand what a difference a paramedic can make, he knew that he wanted to further his education and attend paramedic school. "Going to paramedic school right here at Sanford Ambulance seemed like the best choice for me. It was



not only familiar, but I have also seen other EMTs complete the program and become successful paramedics who are now recognized leaders of Sanford Ambulance. Seeing them go through Sanford Ambulance for school and watching them grow as healthcare providers made me want that for myself.”

When the Sanford Ambulance Non-Emergency Ambulance Transport (NEAT) division was created in 2021, Justin saw a unique opportunity to help develop and shape an entirely new way that EMS is delivered at Sanford Ambulance. In 2022, Justin moved from the 911 side of EMS to being the Charge EMT for NEAT. In addition to extra duties, as a Charge EMT, Justin helps train new EMTs that are hired to work on the NEAT team. Having the ability to help develop how the new division works was appealing to Justin. One of the most challenging aspects of the NEAT division that Justin has seen is the lack of foundation or model, meaning that NEAT is so new, there really isn't a layout in place for what works and what doesn't. Since NEAT has started, how the team is best utilized within the Sanford Ambulance system has continued to grow and expand. NEAT has tremendously helped alleviate some calls from the 911 side of Sanford Ambulance, but there have



been several challenges trying to figure out where the team fits in to the bigger picture of emergency response in our community. NEAT has grown from only responding to interfacility transfers to taking out-of-town transfers, escorting flight teams, working standby events, and transporting deceased patients to their destination. Justin says, “Finding consistency in the department with all of the new changes can be difficult, but so far the team has managed to see success with their efforts.”

Another reason for his move to the NEAT team was the opportunity to have his paramedic schooling fully reimbursed after working as a full-time employee for one year. After delaying paramedic school partially due to financial reasons, this opportunity allowed him to enroll without as much financial stress. One of Justin's favorite parts about working on the NEAT team is having the ability to work with other EMTs who are planning on attending paramedic school and helping them set up a path for success with school and work.



An additional challenge that Justin currently faces is working while attending paramedic school. His time management skills are being tested as he tries to juggle school with work. Being able to find a consistent work schedule while finding enough time to dedicate to school and clinicals has been difficult to balance. Because Justin is currently in paramedic school, when he's not working on the NEAT team, he is spending many hours riding with the 911 crews as a student. This has only made him more eager to return to responding to 911 calls.

Justin says that being able to work and attend school at the same place has been a huge advantage for him. Being familiar with the setting has made the education he receives more relatable and easier to understand. Being able to talk about school with coworkers who have been through the same process has provided insight on how to succeed in school and work.

Justin notes that one of the biggest challenges that EMS providers face is remembering to take care of themselves.

EMTs and paramedics see a lot of difficult scenes over and over again; most of these are things that a normal person never has to experience. Having to be a leader and maintain a professional demeanor during these situations can really take its toll on a person. "It's not always as simple as ignoring it and moving on," says Justin. "Mental health is just as important as physical health, and sometimes, emergency responders need to be reminded of that."

When asked what advice he would give to someone looking to get into the EMS field, Justin says, "The truth is that EMS is not for everyone. I think the reason that there are so many people who change career paths after initially wanting to pursue EMS is a lack of understanding of the profession." Justin encourages anyone interested in EMS to try to experience it first-hand – to take a CPR class, participate in ambulance ride-alongs, or join a first responder service as a volunteer. As for future goals, Justin says that he hopes to eventually move back to the 911 side of EMS after completing paramedic school. "When I can make a positive impact, whether it's a coworker, a new hire, a supervisor, hospital staff, a fellow responder, a family member of a patient, or most importantly, a patient themselves, I find satisfaction in knowing that I was able to play a role in making a situation easier and better for someone else."



***“You’re going to get out of this field what you’re willing to put into it. A lot of effort can go a long way, and it will reflect on your ability to make a difference for each patient. If I can at least make someone having a bad day feel a little bit better, even if it’s just temporary, that is what is rewarding to me. The most rewarding part of working EMS is being given the opportunity to have a positive impact on not only the patients that I care for, but also the people I work with.”***

- Justin Roggenkamp - Sanford Ambulance

**NEW IN 2022:**

# Non-Emergency Ambulance Transport

In late 2021, Sanford Ambulance launched the **Non-Emergency Ambulance Transport (NEAT)** program. The original mission of NEAT was to facilitate transports between healthcare facilities in the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo area, but throughout the year, the mission has grown to include assisting with out-of-town transfers, escorting flight teams and working standby events.

Because each of the three Sanford hospital locations in Fargo focus on different healthcare needs, the majority of transports that NEAT EMTs provide are for patients that need to be moved between those three hospitals. Which hospital the patient will be admitted to is based on what services are provided at the location to best meet the needs of the patient. NEAT EMTs are primarily scheduled during the times that are busiest for transports between area hospitals. In addition to helping make sure that interfacility transfers are completed in a timely manner, NEAT crews also help reduce the workload for 911 crews by allowing those crews to focus on emergency calls that take place throughout the community.

The NEAT division is comprised of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), many of whom are either attending paramedic school or have hopes of attending paramedic school in the future. NEAT EMTs don't respond to 911 calls; instead, they are dedicated to caring for patients while transporting them to the definitive care that they need.

NEAT EMTs have a unique opportunity to enhance their patient assessment and communication skills and get familiar with Sanford Ambulance. Having crews dedicated to focus on interfacility transports has many benefits that will help them develop their EMS career into the future. After working as a NEAT team member for one year, the EMT is eligible for a full scholarship to paramedic school through the Sanford Health EMS Education/North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) paramedic program.



## Employee Highlight:

# Nathaniel Dutt



When Nathaniel Dutt walked into his first day of the F-M Ambulance Explorers program at the age of 16, he would have never imagined that 18 years later, he would still be walking through those same doors for work each day. Nate's career in EMS almost never happened – he had originally joined the Fargo Police Explorers program with the goal of becoming a law enforcement and K-9 officer. After doing several ride-alongs with the police department, Nate was interested in learning more about what the ambulance crews did. In 2005, he joined the F-M Ambulance Explorers program in order to do ride-alongs and learn more about EMS.

The Explorers program is a career-shadowing program that offers high school students an opportunity to observe and learn about emergency services from paramedics and EMTs. The Explorer program is a great way for high school students to see if a career in EMS is the right fit for them. Explorers attend monthly meetings to learn about EMS and get hands-on experience through ride-alongs. Paramedics and EMTs not only teach the Explorers about patient care, they show them how to treat all patients with compassion and respect. Whether an Explorer chooses to follow an EMS career path or not, the Explorers program helps equip young people with character, leadership, and life skills that can be used both today and in whatever future career they choose.

**2005 Explorers**

**2007 EMT**

**2008 Paramedic**

**2021 Dispatcher**

**2022 Charge Dispatcher**

During his senior year of high school, Nate received a scholarship from the Explorers program to attend EMT class. Nate's plan was to take the EMT course, and then attend college to major in criminal justice or law enforcement. During his EMT class, Nate made some good friends, and together, they all decided to attend paramedic school.

After spending so much time at F-M Ambulance during paramedic school, Nate knew that he wanted to work there too. Nate's plan was to work as a dispatcher for the final 4 months of paramedic school, but he



didn't get his application submitted in time. Instead, he was hired and worked as a 911 EMT while he finished paramedic school – this meant that he spent nearly all of his time at the ambulance service. Working as an EMT helped Nate become proficient at some of the important basic life support and operational skills, which made it possible for him to focus more on his clinical skills once he became a paramedic. Once he completed his paramedic field training program, Nate says that he beyond a doubt knew that he had found what he was meant to do.

While working as a paramedic, Nate cross-trained as a dispatcher to help out when other dispatchers were out for extended periods of time. Because he had always loved computers and data entry, the fast pace of the dispatch environment intrigued Nate. “I truly enjoyed both working working as a 911 paramedic and a dispatcher – it was fulfilling to see both systems work so smoothly together to help our community”. Nate was also a field training officer (FTO), responsible for training and evaluation of new employees.



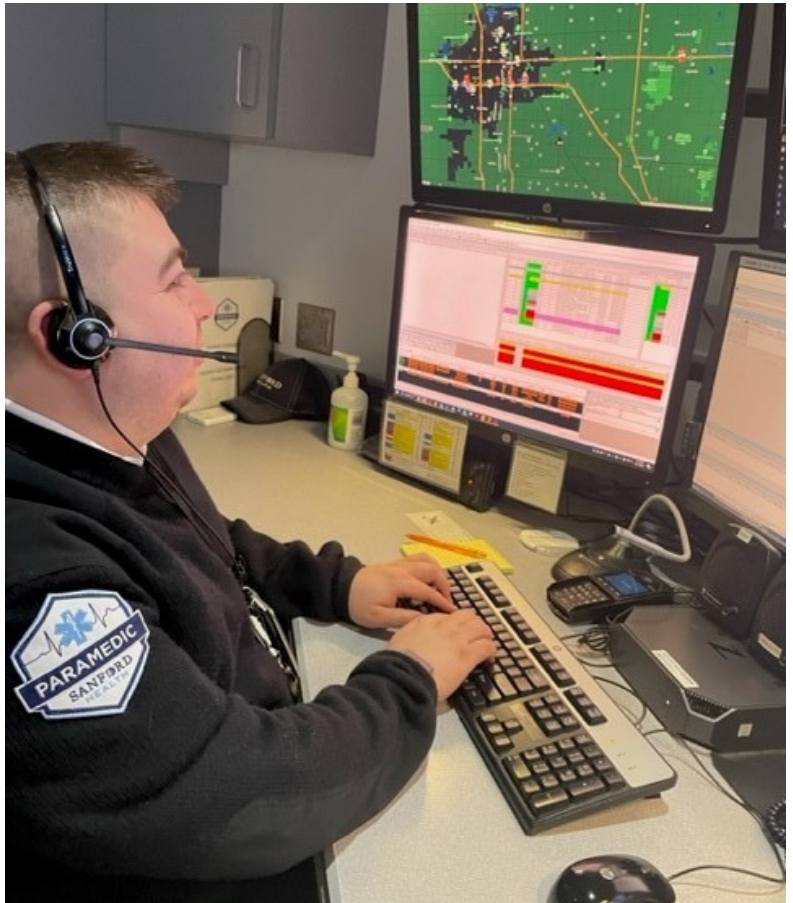
After working as a paramedic for about 12 years, Nate realized that his career was really taking a toll on him. Nate recognized that he was suffering from compassion fatigue – the physical, emotional and psychological impact of helping others through serious situations was becoming overwhelming. He recognized that he had taken care of others for so long, it became difficult for him to take care of himself. Although he didn't want to give up being a paramedic, Nate knew that he needed a change of pace, so he decided to adjust things in his life. In 2021, Nate made the move to work as a Sanford Ambulance dispatcher full-time, although he still picks up 911 ambulance shifts when the streets are short-staffed.

In 2022, Nate was promoted to Charge Dispatcher, which means that he works as a dispatcher, but also has some additional responsibilities that help take the burden off of the Dispatch Manager. Charge Dispatchers are mentors to new employees; they offer guidance and direction when there are questions or problems. When the Dispatch Manager isn't working, the Charge Dispatcher is the first-line resource to help manage daily staffing needs or any issues that may arise. Nate also functions as a Dispatch FTO, assisting and training new dispatchers.

When asked what people may not know about emergency services, Nate said, “One thing that I don't think many people understand is that whether you're a police officer, a firefighter, an EMT, a paramedic, or a dispatcher, one of the biggest challenges in the emergency service field is the stress of the job. Being exposed to serious, often life-threatening situations over and over is very difficult not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally”. About three years ago, Sanford Ambulance started a Peer Assistance

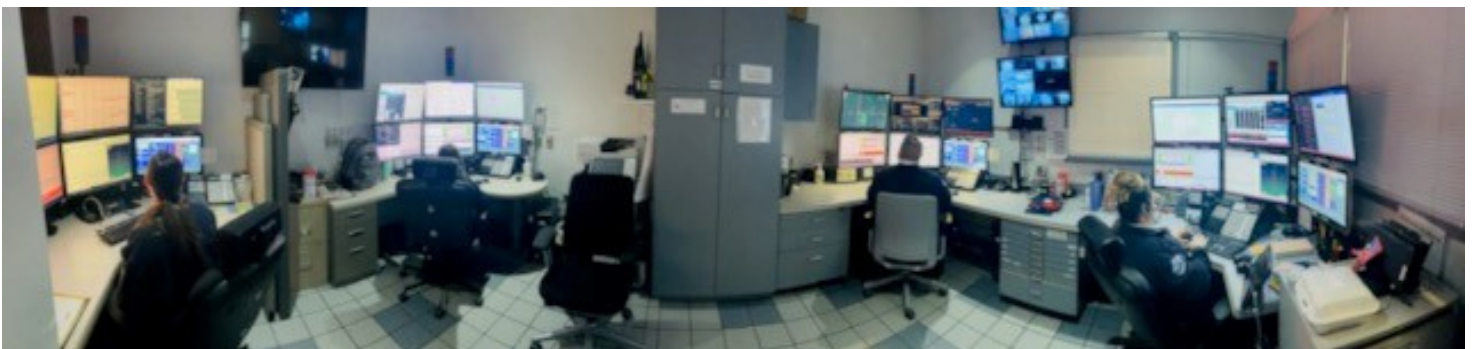
Crisis Team (PACT). The PACT team is comprised of EMTs and paramedics from Sanford Ambulance that are available for co-workers to contact at any time, about any situation, whether it's a tough call or a personal issue. The goal of the PACT team is to promote healthy coping skills to co-workers through confidential peer-to-peer interactions. PACT members are trained to help co-workers learn how to cope with and get through difficult calls and situations in a healthy way.

Unfortunately, people often feel that there is an unspoken stigma surrounding mental health and well-being, especially in public safety. Providers sometimes feel less of themselves if they admit that they are having mental health problems. After being exposed to repeated trauma, like public service providers are, it is very common for the cumulative effect of those calls to cause mental health problems. The PACT team helps support peers by talking about some of those more stressful events and helps normalize the feelings that EMS providers might have. Sometimes, it's easier talking with a peer than someone who doesn't understand what it's like to respond to life-or-death calls. Nate is proud to be a member of the Sanford Ambulance PACT team – he says, “I am lucky that we have a great PACT team – without them, I may not still be working as a paramedic or a dispatcher”.



Nate says that he sees himself staying in public safety for the rest of his career. “I enjoy the people that I work with and love that every day is different. Although it is hard work, EMS is an incredibly rewarding career”.

**“I love being able to help people every day. Coming to work every day and being a part of the system that helps people in crisis, in their time of need, really gives me a sense of accomplishment.”** - Nate Dutt - Sanford Ambulance



## Employee Highlight:

# Dawn Mertz



When Dawn Mertz, a Community Paramedic with Sanford Ambulance in Fargo, pulled up to her patient's home, she didn't have a partner, she wasn't using her lights and sirens, and she wasn't in a rush. She casually walked up to the patient's door, knocked, and waited patiently for him to answer. She knew that it might take a little longer than normal, because he had just been discharged from the hospital after a fall, and was still regaining some of the strength that he lost during his hospital stay.

During his hospitalization, it had been determined that this patient might have a higher chance to be readmitted to the hospital if he didn't closely follow his discharge directions. He didn't qualify for most of the home health and social services available in the community, which is where Dawn came in. As a Community Paramedic (CP), Dawn's goal is to provide access to primary and preventive care and decrease the use of emergency care resources, like the emergency department and 911. Community Paramedics help fill the gap in services for patients who don't qualify to receive care from home healthcare programs and/or social services.

1993 EMT

1994 Paramedic

2000 Flight Medic

2014 Critical Care Paramedic

2017 Community Paramedic

Anyone on a patient's healthcare team can request services from a Community Paramedic through a referral system. Once accepted into the program, the healthcare team and the CP work together to deliver the best care possible to the patient. Because Community Paramedics are experienced paramedics who receive advanced training in comprehensive health assessments, chronic disease monitoring and education, medication compliance, immunizations and vaccinations, and hospital discharge follow-up care, they are a valuable resource for both the hospital and EMS. Not only does the Community Paramedic benefit the patient by bringing healthcare to them, their services benefit the ambulance and the hospital system by reducing the number of frequent 911 callers and readmissions. "Often times," Dawn says, "Healthcare is complicated, especially if you're older, if English isn't your primary language, or you have



multiple different specialists but no primary care provider. Our job is to make everything a little easier by making sure our patients understand and follow their healthcare plan and can effectively communicate with their healthcare team.”

Being a Community Paramedic isn't where Dawn thought she would be when she first started her EMS career. While in her first year in NDSU's pharmacy doctorate program, Dawn started watching the show “Rescue 911”. She was intrigued, so she decided to go to F-M Ambulance and see if she could ride along with the ambulance to see what it was really like. Although nothing 'exciting' happened on that ride along, she was hooked. Dawn immediately enrolled in the EMT program; once she successfully completed that, she continued on to the paramedic program at F-M Ambulance.



While working full-time as a paramedic, Dawn finished her degree at NDSU. Her intention was to continue her education and become a Physician Assistant (PA), but while she was applying for PA school, the director of Meritcare's Lifeflight program contacted her about a position on his team. Working at Lifeflight was a highly sought-after job – paramedic spots on the team rarely became available. Dawn decided to accept the position at Lifeflight, and her love of flying, emergency medicine, and critical care led to a 17-year career as a flight medic. Because she was always looking for opportunities to learn and expand her skills, while she was working as a flight medic, Dawn obtained her Flight Paramedic Certification in 2014 and her Community Paramedic certification in 2017.

In 2018, Dawn was ready for another change. Dawn heard about a rural MN ambulance service that wanted to create a critical care ground response unit. This excited Dawn; she could use her years of critical care experience to help create the program from scratch. The new program would allow her to take care of critically ill and severely injured patients and gain leadership experience; the only downside of the job was the 1-hour commute to and from home each day. While working on the critical care ground ambulance, Dawn was also able to use her CP training filling in as a Community Paramedic when help was needed in that department.

After two years of traveling through snowstorms and sometimes sleeping on a cot in her office, Dawn decided that it was time to find something closer to home. She still wanted to provide patient care, but was looking for something that wouldn't be so hard on her body. The timing was perfect – Sanford Ambulance was looking to add a paramedic to their Community Paramedic team. Dawn was hired as a CP at Sanford Ambulance in March of 2020.



Looking back at her nearly 30-year career in EMS, Dawn says that she wouldn't do anything different. She is grateful that she has had the opportunity to provide care for people in many different ways that are tied to emergency services. "EMS is a great career. The field of EMS is always advancing, changing and evolving. There are opportunities in so many different areas, such as 911 response, flight, critical care, or community paramedicine. The job truly is what you make it." Dawn says that as long as someone is willing to learn, there will always be opportunities in emergency medicine. Dawn says that she would encourage someone interested in EMS to become an EMT first, and then see where that takes them. She says, "I've had many friends who have stayed in EMS for 20+ years. I also know many people who have used EMS as a stepping-stone for other careers, either in the emergency service field or in another healthcare field."

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***“I've worked in EMS for my entire career because I love the organized chaos that comes with this field. No two patients are ever the same. I love learning, and in EMS, you can learn something new from every single patient.”***

- Dawn Mertz - Sanford Ambulance



Dawn plans to stay in her Community Paramedic role until she retires. Community Paramedics go beyond basic healthcare services to care for high-risk groups of patients in our community who may otherwise have difficulty receiving the care that they need. She says that although the Sanford Ambulance Community Paramedic program may be less visible to the public than typical emergency services that are provided by an ambulance, they are still a very important part of the healthcare system because of the vital role they play in reducing unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital re-admissions.



## Employee Highlight:

# Tom Dobrzynski

When you meet Tom Dobrzynski for the first time, you learn quickly that he enjoys challenges, which could explain why he has been in the Emergency Medical Services field for over 25 years. From starting out as a volunteer EMT to currently working as a manager of the Non-Emergency Ambulance Transport division of Sanford Ambulance, Tom's experiences have helped him see EMS from many different aspects. This has helped him be a compassionate caregiver as well as an understanding leader.

1997 **EMT**

2005 **Paramedic**

2008 **SWAT Medic**

2013 **Flight Medic**

2014 **Paramedic Program Coordinator**

2022 **NEAT Manager**

While in high school, Tom was active in the Civil Air Patrol, where he was first exposed to search and rescue and basic first aid. After high school, Tom joined the Army National Guard and received his EMT training in the National Guard's combat medic course. Tom volunteered for an ambulance service in Walker, MN before being deployed to Bosnia. While in Bosnia, Tom attended a course that was taught by fellow Guardsman Rick Cameron. Rick encouraged Tom to look into the paramedic program that was taught at F-M Ambulance in Fargo. After returning from Bosnia, Tom enrolled in paramedic school.

After obtaining his National Registry Paramedic certification, Tom worked as a 911 medic at F-M Ambulance for 8 years. In 2008, he heard that there was an opening for a paramedic on the Red River Valley SWAT Team, which was a great way for Tom to combine his love of EMS and the military. As one





of six Tactical EMS (TEMS) medics on the RRV Swat Team, Tom was an integral part of the team and got to use both his military training and medical expertise to provide medical care for not only the police officers on scene, but also suspects and bystanders.

In 2013, Tom saw that Sanford AirMed was hiring flight medics. Although he thoroughly enjoyed his time on the ambulance, he was ready for a new challenge and accepted a flight medic position. Providing care to critically sick or injured patients in the flight setting was new and exciting, but after six months of flying, Tom's interest was piqued by another job opportunity - the Sanford Ambulance EMS Education department was looking for a paramedic program coordinator. After spending some time thinking about it, Tom decided to apply for the education position. From 2014 - 2022, Tom taught and coordinated the Sanford Health EMS Education paramedic program.



**“ My favorite part of coordinating the paramedic program was getting to know the students and watching them go from new EMTs to confident paramedics who were excited to use their skills and knowledge to help our community. ”** - Tom Dobrzynski, Sanford Ambulance

In 2021, Tom decided to take on a new challenge as the manager of the newly created Sanford Ambulance Non-Emergency Ambulance Transport (NEAT) team. The NEAT team is comprised of EMTs and paramedics that facilitate non-emergency transports between healthcare facilities in the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo area. As our community has grown, so has the number of healthcare facilities that require transportation between them. In order to help assure that those transports take place in a timely manner, the NEAT division of Sanford Ambulance was launched in December 2021, and Tom accepted his new position of manager at that time.

“I think that all of my roles in EMS have one thing that ties them together - you are dealing with people that have a wide variety of backgrounds and different life stories. Whether you're helping someone in an emergency, you're teaching, or you are managing employees, you need to try to understand where the person is coming from - the decisions that they make, the way that they are acting, and what they are saying may be due to the circumstance that they are in. I need to try to understand where they are coming from, which may influence why they make the decisions that they do. I think that is important whether you're helping someone through a crisis, dealing with a student who isn't doing well, or assisting an employee through a difficult situation.”



# 2022 SANFORD AMBULANCE AWARDS

Congratulations to all of the 2022 Sanford Ambulance award recipients!

The **Star of the Year** award is given to a provider who consistently gives excellent patient care and customer service. The 2022 award recipient is *Jessica Reil*.

The **Employee of the Year** is someone who demonstrates the importance of being a great team member every day. The 2022 award recipient is *Scott Helmer*.

The **Rising Star Award** is given to a new team member who has shown promise in their first few months or years with the company. The 2022 award recipient is *Austin Osland*.

The **SHEMSE Preceptor of the Year** has shown commitment to providing a positive learning experience for all students. The 2022 award recipient is *Anna Ringhofer*.

The **VFW Award** is awarded to a team member who has a strong commitment to disaster response incidents or tactical EMS. The 2022 award recipient is *Nate Dutt*.

The **Medal of Meritorious Service** recipient has gone above and beyond their job duties without expectation of reward. The 2022 award recipient is *Greg Glood*.



*Reil*



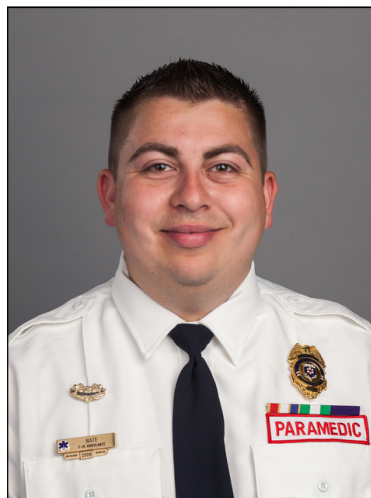
*Helmer*



*Osland*



*Ringhofer*



*Dutt*



*Glood*



## NEW IN 2022:

# West Fargo Post 10

In September 2022, Sanford Ambulance officially opened a new post in West Fargo, located at 2255 Sheyenne Street. The location of the new post allows convenient and easy access to Sheyenne Street. The main building is a large garage with room for an ambulance and a comfortable crew quarters built in. The garage also houses many of the MCI vehicles, including the AmBus, the Incident Command Trailer and the Supply Truck. This is Sanford Ambulance's second permanent location in West Fargo; the other West Fargo station opened in 2011 and is located on the northeast side of Veteran's Boulevard and I-94. Sanford Ambulance has proudly served the community of West Fargo for over 60 years.

Sanford Ambulance uses a system status management (SSM) model to deploy ambulances, meaning that data is used to match supply to demand. SSM allows dispatchers to strategically position ambulances throughout the communities that we serve based on historical data that aids in predicting demand during different times during the day and night. As more data is gathered about when and where ambulances are

needed, staffing is adjusted to have more resources available during busier times, and station those resources closest to where the next call is likely to occur. The goal of system status management is to do the most amount of good, for the most amount of people, without wasting resources.





**NEW IN 2022:**

# Ambulances

The word "ambulance" originates from the Latin word "ambulare", meaning "to walk or move about." The meaning of the word evolved to "a walking hospital" (mobile hospitals, also called field hospitals, would follow army troops in their movements). Eventually, instead of the medical facilities moving, horses and wagons were used to transport sick or injured patients to medical facilities. Today, ambulances are defined as vehicles that are specially equipped to take sick or injured patients to and from the hospital, especially in emergencies.

There are several businesses that manufacture ambulances throughout the United States, but for the last 20 years, Sanford Ambulance has purchased ambulances from Osage Industries. Five years ago, Sanford Ambulance went through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, where several different ambulance manufacturers were brought to Fargo so our team could view their products. After careful review, the RFP team chose to stay with Osage, partially due to their ability to custom-build ambulances to fit their customers needs.



Sanford Ambulance has a mix of new and remounted Ford Type III ambulances. A Type III ambulance is mounted on a cutaway van chassis; the connection between the cab and the patient module is typically similar to a small doorway, instead of a window that you would see in a Type I ambulance. Over the past few years, due to the increased demands for ambulances due to COVID and supply chain disruptions, the average time it takes to order and receive an ambulance has increased to anywhere from 12 to 24 months.

When customizing new ambulances, Sanford Ambulance relies heavily on the recommendations of the Clinical and Safety Committees. Once the inside of the ambulance is outfitted with the technology it needs and the state-required equipment, the Sanford Ambulance Clinical Committee helps determine what other inventory should be carried. In order to keep Sanford Ambulance EMS providers safe, recommendations are also taken from the Safety Committee. Over the past 20 years, Sanford Ambulance has worked hard to customize ambulances to provide a safe work environment for providers. Changes have been made throughout the vehicle to assure that everything can be secured so that in the event of a crash, there should not be any harmful projectiles. The rear compartment of the ambulance has nets aa

and webbing to help prevent injury to the attendant in the event of a crash. Emergency lighting has evolved to create brighter lights, which help keep emergency service providers safe by making sure the public can see an emergency scene earlier. In order to have continuity, each ALS ambulance is stocked the same, while the NEAT ambulances are stocked primarily for BLS responses.



## Cost of Adding an Ambulance 24-Hours/Day For One Year

Ambulance purchase (one time)	\$325,000
Employee salaries	\$500,000
Employee benefits	\$85,000
Other supplies & expenses	\$28,800
Rent and occupancy	\$98,000
Outside services (repairs)	\$55,000
Depreciation	\$111,000

**Total cost —————▶▶▶▶▶ \$1,202,800**

The typical life of a Sanford Ambulance truck is about seven years. A typical Sanford Ambulance truck is scheduled for one 12-hour shift in a 24-hour period, but sometimes trucks are used for additional events such as out of town transfers, special events, or if another ambulance is in the shop for maintenance. Because the trucks are driven nearly every day, there is a lot of wear-and-tear that takes place, but team members, along with the logistics team, work hard to stay on top of maintenance. Sanford Ambulance crew members complete a daily truck check-off that involves several things including checking tire pressures, checking the oil, and testing the lights and sirens. Each truck goes through a very aggressive and thorough preventative maintenance program, with regimented oil changes and tire rotations, a detailed mechanical inspection every 30,000 miles, scheduled replacements of spark plugs, wheel lugs, and other parts at regularly scheduled intervals. This approach allows Sanford Ambulance to get 250,000 to 300,000 miles from each ambulance before needing to replace it.

"We demand a lot from our vehicles, so it's important that we keep them well-serviced. Preventative maintenance will not only keep our providers and patients safe, it will also help our fleet last considerably longer and save money - if we don't invest in preventative maintenance, we will definitely pay for it later," says Scott Helmer, logistics technician for Sanford Ambulance.

# A LOOK AT THE DATA

## What is a UHU?

Measuring how "busy" an ambulance is can be very difficult, but measuring productivity is important to make sure that our EMS system is functioning efficiently and effectively. One way to measure productivity in EMS is to measure something called **Unit Hour Utilization**, or UHUs. How each ambulance service measures UHUs may vary from department to department, but generally speaking, a UHU is a measure of time that an ambulance crew is actively engaged in calls for service during their shift.

To measure UHUs at Sanford Ambulance, we take the time that the crew has been actively engaged in calls for service (from the time of the call to the completion of the call) and divide it by the shift length. Example: Ambulance crew A spends 5 hours of their 12 hour shift actively engaged in calls for service. To figure out ambulance crew A's UHU, we would divide 5 by 12, which equals about 42%.



**SANFORD AMBULANCE  
2022 AVERAGE UHU 46%**

While the calculation of UHUs sounds easy, determining what to do with those numbers can be tricky. When looking at UHUs, the higher the ratio, the more productive the EMS system is (there are more transports out of fewer ambulances). But there are a number of variables that make a big difference when looking at UHUs - they only show the amount of time engaged in a call for service, not the time doing other duties that happen throughout a shift, such as time spent moving from station to station, completing paperwork, truck checkoffs, cleaning & disinfection, and other daily tasks.

## What does the UHU measurement show?

- It shows how busy crews are. If UHUs are above 45%, it's a busy day for staff. More calls for service also means more cleaning, paperwork, etc.
- It tells us our availability to respond. The lower the UHU, the more availability the crews have to respond to calls for service.
- It helps indicate if we have the appropriate number of ambulances staffed each day. If a trend over a period of time shows that our UHUs are high and it is taking longer to respond to calls for service, that would indicate that more resources need to be scheduled each day. If this occurs sporadically, or if the UHUs are high and response times are adequate, that likely indicates higher than normal calls for service, a decreased number of available ambulances for that day, or both.

The Sanford Ambulance UHU goal is between 40% - 45%. In 2022, our average UHU was 46%. Generally speaking, this would indicate that overall, we're close to the target in regards to the number of available ambulances each day. Sanford Ambulance uses the UHU number, along with several other trends, to find opportunities to fine-tune the response plan for our community.

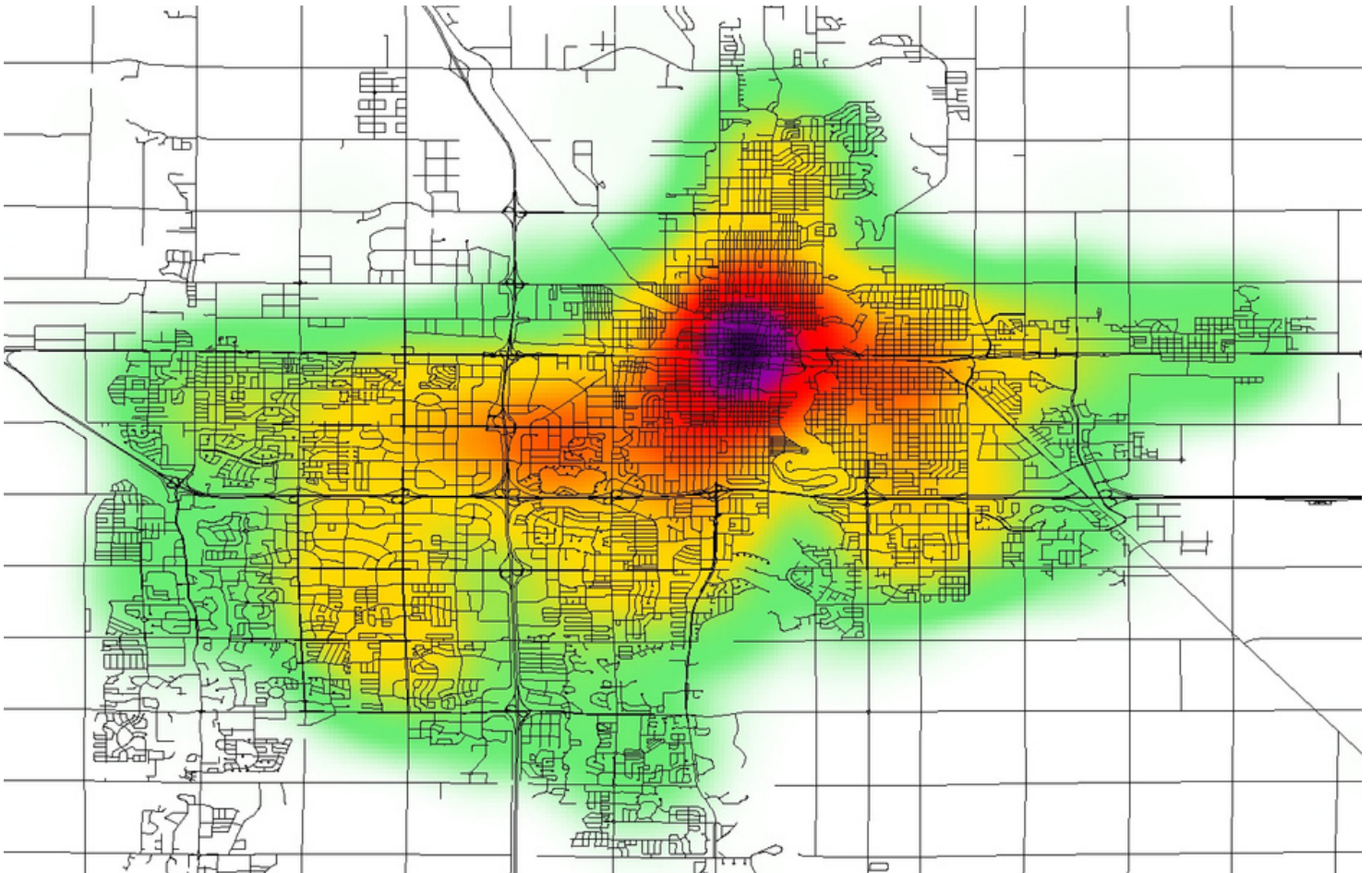


# A LOOK AT THE DATA

In an emergency, every minute counts, which is why Sanford Ambulance has used a mix of data and cutting-edge technology to assist with strategically positioning ambulances throughout the community to respond to emergencies. Knowing when and where people are most likely to call 911 helps reduce response times, which provides quicker pre-hospital care. Sanford Ambulance uses heat map technology to help position ambulances in areas of greatest need throughout the community and get a crew to the patient in the shortest amount of time possible.

Since 1996, Sanford Ambulance has used a heat map system, which uses data to show what areas in our community are more likely to need emergency services at various times throughout the day. When heat mapping began, pins were placed in a map to show where calls were more likely to happen. In 2004, the process was updated; data from previous years was entered into a computer, which processed the information and created a heat map.

The heat map that Sanford Ambulance uses is a two-dimensional map that uses color schemes to represent a higher call volume. The heat map below shows an overall look at 2022, with the darker color depicting higher call volumes.



# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

142

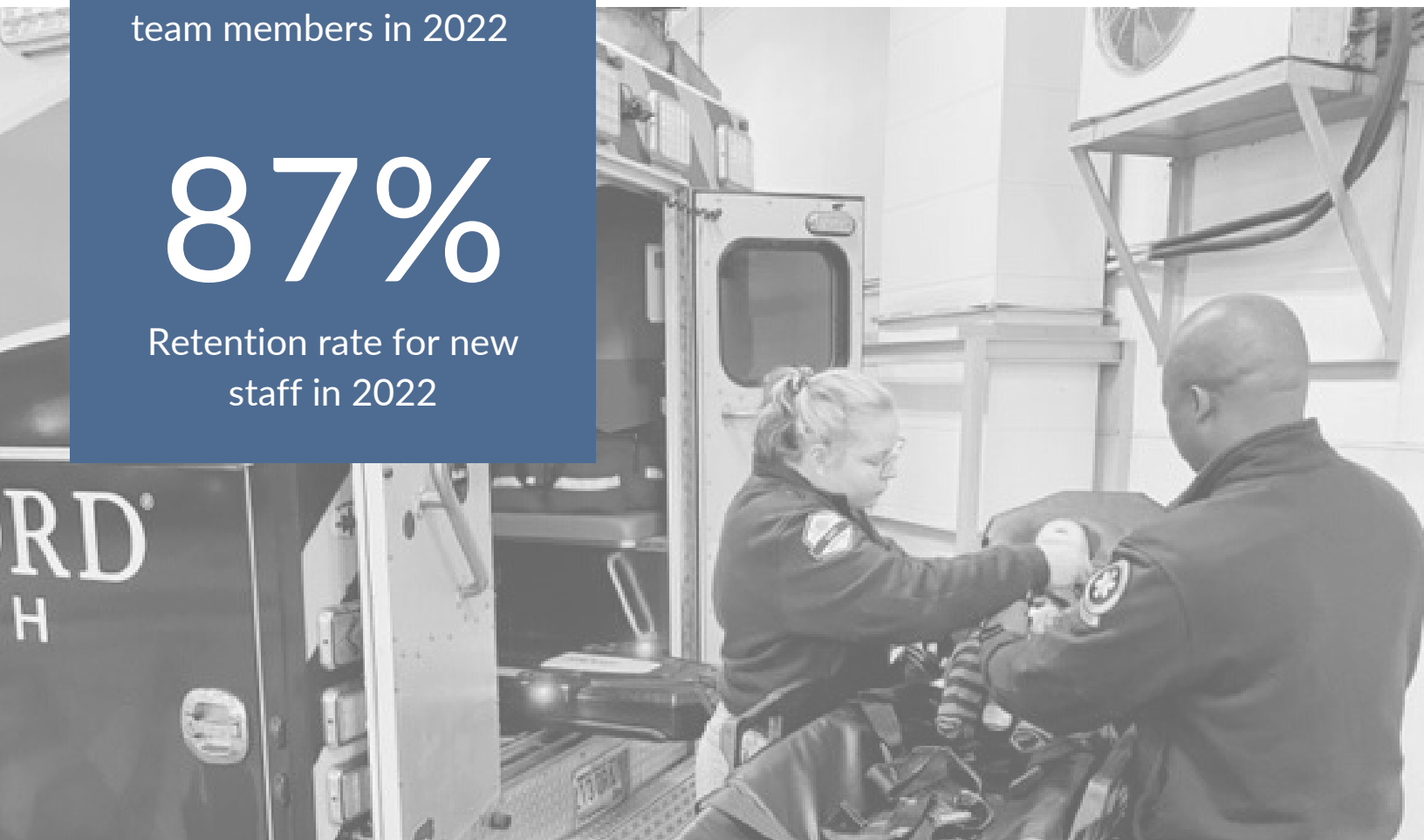
Total Number of  
Sanford Ambulance - Fargo  
Team Members in 2022

38

New Sanford Ambulance  
team members in 2022

87%

Retention rate for new  
staff in 2022



# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

2,042

Number of students that learned about seatbelt safety from a Buckle Up with Bucky presentation



22

Number of free CPR classes donated to community member benefits through the Lend a Hand Up program



1,954

Number of hours dedicated to community benefits in 2022 by Sanford Ambulance employees

86

Number of kids in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo that received a free ice cream voucher for wearing a helmet



17,860

Number of hours dedicated to charitable ambulance events



# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

**How many calls for service did Sanford Ambulance respond to in 2022?**

**32,531**

**How often did Sanford Ambulance respond to urban emergency calls in less than nine minutes?**

**93.35%**

*When an emergency happens, it may seem like it takes forever for help to arrive. Although there is no universally accepted response time goal, most urban ambulance services in the U.S. use the goal of responding to at least 90% of their calls in under nine minutes.*

**What was the average chute time?**

*Chute time is the time the dispatch tells the crew about the call to the time that their wheels start turning to respond to the call. Sanford Ambulance's chute time goal is 0:30.*

**0:27**

**What was the average response time for an ambulance in 2022?**

**7:27**

**What was the average transport time (from scene to emergency room) in 2022?**

**12:50**

**What was the average time spent on an emergency call (time dispatched to time available at the hospital)?**

**42:06**

**How many calls did an average Sanford Ambulance paramedic respond to in 2022?**

**614**

**How many miles was the longest patient transport in 2022?**

**322**  
miles

**What is the average number of phone calls that come in to the Sanford Ambulance dispatch center each day?**

**142**

**What is the average number of radio transmissions that take place in the Sanford Ambulance dispatch center each day?**

**692**

# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE **32,531**

**23,333** PATIENTS TRANSPORTED

OVERALL MILES DRIVEN  
BY OUR CREWS **543,605**

**76,674** GALLONS OF FUEL USED

TOTAL COST OF FUEL **\$280,616**

**\$153,149** TOTAL COST OF  
VEHICLE REPAIRS

# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

NUMBER OF IV'S  
PLACED

**4,956**

NUMBER OF  
INTRAOSSEOUS INFUSIONS

**185**

MEDICATIONS  
ADMINISTERED

**7,616**

PATIENTS WHO  
RECEIVED AN  
ADVANCED AIRWAY

**169**

PATIENTS PLACED  
ON OXYGEN

**2,298**

STROKE ALERTS

**100**

TRAUMA ALERTS

**114**





# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS



## Number of cardiac arrests

176

Cardiac arrest happens when the heart stops beating. Without immediate intervention, a patient in cardiac arrest will die.



## Patients with cath lab activation (STEMI)

48

A **ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction**, or STEMI, is a very serious type of heart attack in which one of the heart's major arteries is blocked.



## Number of patients placed on a cardiac monitor

6,711

A cardiac monitor can record the electrical activity of a patient's heart. Cardiac monitors are used to identify heart rhythms and help determine the right course of treatment for a patient.



## Number of times the LUCAS was used

163

The LUCAS is a machine that provides high-quality, consistent mechanical chest compressions to patients in cardiac arrest.



# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

## Sanford Health EMS Education

Sanford Health EMS Education (SHEMSE) is a nationally recognized leader in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) education. The SHEMSE department provides training in emergency medical courses to all levels of providers, including childcare, industry, emergency medical responders, nurses and doctors. The nine full-time educators are all paramedics who have diverse backgrounds and years of experience and are committed to educating our community as well as our future healthcare providers.

2022  
Paramedic Students

24

2022  
EMT Students

160

2022  
Public Courses

800

2022  
Public Students

3,471





# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

## Ready Wheels

For over 30 years, Sanford Ambulance has been the home to Ready Wheels, a professional, non-emergency wheelchair transportation service. Ready Wheels is designed to provide local and long distance wheelchair transportation to anyone whose needs are not met by other services in our community.

Total number of Ready Wheels calls in 2022:

**3,234**

Ready Wheels drivers are trained and approved using Minnesota DOT Special Transportation guidelines. Drivers are also trained in first aid, CPR, passenger assistance, customer safety, prevention of abuse and customer service.

## Sanford Health Industry Involvement





# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

## Sanford Ambulance Community Paramedics

Community Paramedics help connect patients who don't qualify for home-based health services with appropriate services and resources. CP's help decrease the use of emergency rooms and 911/emergency services.

### Goals of the Community Paramedic program:

- ➔ Chronic disease education and monitoring
- ➔ Reduce 911 requests
- ➔ Complete post-hospital follow-up care
- ➔ Provide medical education
- ➔ Provide and connect patient to primary care services
- ➔ Provide personalized, in-home care



- From **May 1, 2021 - April 30, 2022**, Sanford Ambulance Community Paramedics connected with **111 patients**.
- The patients were tracked for 6 months prior to their contact with the Sanford Health CP team and for 6 months following their final CP contact.

Event	% Change	Approximate Amount Saved
Emergency Room Visits	↓ Decrease 51.2%	\$249,000
Walk-in Clinic Visits	↓ Decrease 7.9%	\$2,000
Scheduled Clinic Encounters	↑ Increase 25.3%	\$174,000
Inpatient Admissions	↓ Decrease 56.5%	N/A
Days Hospitalized	↓ Decrease 56.3%	\$1,110,000

**\$1,500,000** ➔

Approximate amount Community Paramedics helped save the healthcare system by teaching patients how to use scheduled clinic encounters instead of emergency or walk-in visits.

# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

## Top 10 Most Common Calls

1. Behavioral Emergency
2. Abdominal Pain
3. Alcohol Use
4. Generalized Weakness
5. Suicidal Ideation
6. Shortness of Breath
7. Extremity Pain
8. Back Pain
9. Anxiety Reaction
10. Chest Pain



**Busiest Day of the Week:**

Friday

**Slowest Day of the Week:**

Sunday

**Busiest Time of Day:**

1:00 - 2:00 PM

**Busiest Day of 2022 (tie):**

137 calls in 24 hours  
*Friday, January 21 and  
Tuesday, February 8*

**Least Busy Day of 2022 (tie):**

59 calls in 24 hours  
*Friday, April 1 and  
Sunday, April 10*

**Busiest Truck:**

6745  
*Took 8.13% of the total calls in 2022*

# A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

## Patient Dispositions

### 22,787 Transported, non-emergent

*The decision whether to transport with lights & sirens is based on the patient's needs. The majority of the patients that we transport are not emergent transports.*

### 5,094 Cancelled

*Sometimes we are cancelled prior to arriving at a call if care is not needed.*

### 1,904 Assessed, no transport

*Some patients may be injured or sick, but they don't need ambulance transport.*

### 1,574 Refusal

*Unless a patient is unconscious or in an altered state of mind, everyone has the right to refuse ambulance transport.*

### 546 Transported, emergent

*Lights & sirens are used to transport patients who are critically ill or injured in order to get them to definitive care quickly.*

### 249 Other

### 185 Treated & released

*In some cases, we can treat a patient on-scene so they don't need to be seen in the emergency department.*

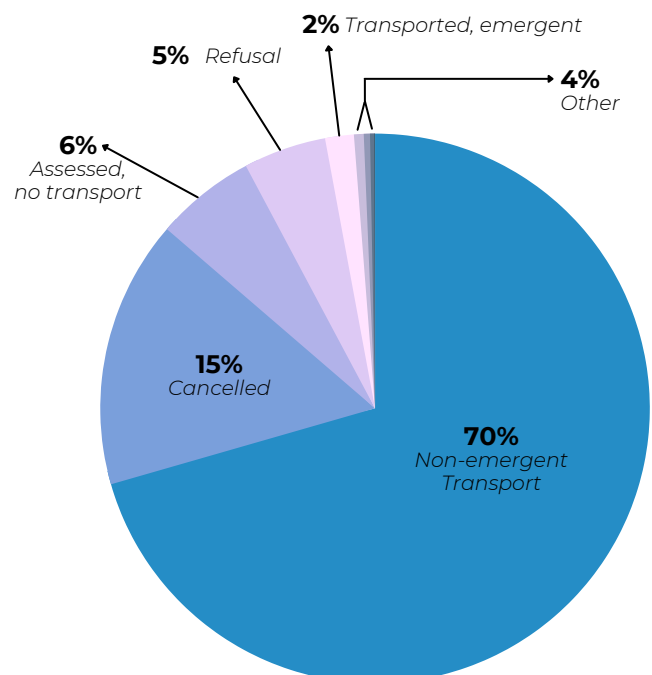
### 117 Deceased

### 83 Intercept

*Sanford Ambulance will provide ALS services to rural communities; our ALS providers will meet them on the way to the hospital after the rural first responders have started caring for the patient.*

### 19 Organ transport

*Time can be critical in organ transplants - if we have a truck available, we will help transport organs to help save lives.*





# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As I said in the beginning of this document, workforce is a challenge for our agency and virtually every EMS agency. We simply need more people to dedicate their career path in the EMS professions. In 2023 we will have our first Sanford Paramedic Academy, which will provide free EMT and Paramedic training to a select group of students. Those students will also be paid for their training time as employees and be eligible for benefits. We hope to attract talented people that would not otherwise be able to dedicate the substantial amount of time to become a paramedic.



In 2022 we established a new ambulance post in West Fargo to accommodate the metro growth to the south and west. In 2023 we hope to establish a new ambulance post in south Moorhead as that city grows southward as well. In subsequent years we look to build a new headquarters station near the 64th Avenue South intersection with I-94 and to have a dedicated post in Hawley, MN. Our communities are growing and we intend to keep up with that pace.



I want to thank the many dedicated professionals that work at Sanford Ambulance Fargo. They have touched many lives over the past year. It will largely go unnoticed but I know they provide great care, show empathy, and make a difference every time. I'm humbled with how they accept that great responsibility.

Thank you,

*Tim Meyer*

Tim Meyer, Senior Director  
Sanford Ambulance Fargo





SANFORD  
LEVEL 1 TRAUMA

SANFORD®

MEG  
04/30/2023  
FAR  
FAR  
FAR