

# Award winners honored

The 2008 Texas EMS and Trauma Awards, presented during Texas EMS Conference in Fort Worth, honored the best in EMS and trauma in 13 categories.

**EMS Public Information/Injury Prevention Award – Clear Lake Emergency Medical Corps** for community outreach programs that make them a leader in public information and injury prevention. The list of programs is extensive: free



*Clear Lake Emergency Medical Corps took home the award for EMS Public Information/Injury Prevention*

immunization clinics for children that include ID kits and safety education; free community CPR classes; car seat checks staffed by certified car seat technicians that include new, donated seats to replace unsafe seats; bike medics who serve as first responders at community events; an outdoor outreach program that teaches children safe hunting and fishing practices and how to be good stewards of the environment; classes to teach babysitting safety; and teen programs “Don’t Die Needlessly” and “Shattered Dreams.” CLEMC says their efforts have paid off in fewer injuries in the response area.

**EMS Citizen Award – Keith Cypert, 17,** for his quick response in saving the lives of two fellow passengers in a horrendous crash. In May of 2008, Cypert was on the way to check on a



*Parkland Health and Hospital System won the Trauma Facility Award. Irwin Thal (left) and DSHS Assistant Commissioner Kathy Perkins (right) congratulate Jorie Klein, RN. Klein is Parkland’s trauma coordinator.*

grass fire in Knox County when the pickup he was riding in was hit by an 18-wheeler pulling a grain trailer. Both trucks burst into flames. The only one left in the truck conscious, Cypert was able to push open the door and pull a 38-year-old passenger to safety. Even though injured himself, Cypert went



*Keith Cypert, of Monday, second from left, won EMS Citizen Award. On either end are the men he pulled from a burning truck.*

back to the burning truck and dragged a 35-year-old passenger out just before the truck exploded. Both passengers were severely injured but survived and have returned home to their wives and children. Through his quick and heroic actions, Cypert singlehandedly saved the lives of both men. The other driver was not seriously injured.

**EMS Educator – Jodie Harbert, LP,** for his devotion to students and

the betterment of the profession in his many years as an EMS educator. Harbert became an EMS basic coordinator in 1980 and went on to run the Cooke County EMS program for 13 years and the Methodist Dallas Medical Center EMS program for 12 years. Nominators praised Harbert for his ability to not only make learning enjoyable, but also challenge the students to “go the extra mile” to better their educations. Harbert has chaired GETAC’s Education Committee for several years, encouraging the committee to make recommendations that increase the professionalism of EMS. As chair of the Medical Advisory Committee for the North Central Texas Trauma RAC, Harbert has been active in writing protocols and designing a one-day course preparing physicians for their roles as EMS medical directors.

**Designated Trauma Facility – Parkland Health and Hospital System** for its commitment to

improving trauma care and as a role model for excellence in trauma care. Parkland was verified as a Level I trauma center in 1988 by the American College of Surgeons and has been designated since the inception of the Texas trauma designation program in 1993. There has never been a deficiency in program resources in the 15 years of state designation. Program director Jorie Klein has been involved in the trauma program since its inception at Parkland, and has created outreach programs for developing trauma programs across the state. Parkland



*Jodie Harbert won the EMS Educator Award.*

# at Texas EMS Conference



*Mechelle Salmon took home the EMS Administrator Award.*

administrators have provided resources for the trauma program and encouraged staff to participate in regional trauma development.

**EMS Administrator – Mechelle Salmon, LP**

Salmon, LP, for her selfless and inspirational advocacy of EMS in her own community and a neighboring community. Salmon sets high expectations for herself and her staff, all the while fostering a “family-like” environment where everyone is valued. She shares her time, energy and skills not only with her own employees, but with others. She was recently asked to step in to help a neighboring service regain its footing after a DSHS investigation. Nominations praised Salmon’s leadership in the community and in fostering partnerships with other areas of public safety, ultimately benefitting all citizens. Her leadership and support have earned her the respect of colleagues and those in the community.

**Outstanding RAC Award – Gulf Coast Regional Advisory Council (RAC-R)** for the implementation of committees and projects that benefit not only its own area, but potentially the entire Gulf Coast. In the last five years, RAC-R has gone from a loosely-organized group to an active, dynamic one with several working committees. Committee achievements include injury prevention posters at hospitals, development of an airway class offered to each provider in the RAC, launching of the “Don’t Die Needlessly” campaign for teenage drivers and development of the RAC



*Gulf Coast Regional Advisory Council (RAC-R) was honored as Outstanding RAC.*

disaster plan. In addition, the RAC has established three RACS (Regional Alternate Care Site) trailers and a mobile hospital system to use during disasters such as hurricanes. The RAC recently began partnering with SETTRAC (RAC-Q) to combine some resources in case of a hurricane or other large scale disaster. RAC-R recently bought GPS systems for every EMS provider in the RAC to help mutual aid units locate those in need during a disaster.

**EMS Medical Director – Sharon Malone, MD**, for her passion and enthusiasm for EMS personnel and students, and for emergency medicine. Malone serves as medical director for Grayson College and seven EMS providers in Northeast Texas. Nominators praise her for the countless hours she spends making



*Sharon Malone, MD, won Medical Director. From left, DSHS Assistant Commissioner Kathy Perkins, Malone and Interim GETAC Chair Pete Wolf. Malone serves as medical director for seven EMS providers in Northeast Texas and for Grayson College.*

sure medics and students are the best they can be. She creates her own CE modules by reviewing EMS run documentation and teaches classes once a quarter (and requires attendance!). While working as an ER physician, she still finds time to ride out with medics to experience what they do on the street. One new medic writes that Malone takes the time to answer every patient care question he asks her – and he has a lot of questions. Malone recently organized a forum for EMS and hospitals to foster better communication – and ultimately, better patient care.



*Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS won the EMS Public/Private Provider Award.*

**EMS Air Medical Service – San Antonio AirLife** for professionalism and the high standards to which they hold themselves. This air service clearly realizes the value of their ground ambulance partners, routinely providing free continuing education and landing zone classes to EMS providers in the surrounding areas. A nominator said they are always willing to share protocols or expertise – anything that will improve patient outcomes. AirLife staff also makes sure to provide feedback and status on patients EMS providers deliver to the helicopter.

**EMS First Responder Award – Taylor Fire Department** for providing exemplary medical care to the citizens of eastern Williamson County. Taylor FD responds to calls within the city of Taylor and outside city boundaries when requested. Nominated by a medic from Williamson County EMS, Taylor Fire Department is praised for its commitment to training and to having up-to-date equipment. Chief Bruce Watson is cited as an effective leader, supportive of the medical first responder role and well-respected

by his employees. Taylor FD works closely with Williamson County EMS, following their protocols to provide consistent care. The nominator says Taylor FD exemplifies what a quality first responder group should be.

**Telecommunicator Award – Lori Kliem, Pat Cantu and Eva Oguin** of Victoria for their quick actions when a horrific bus crash happened outside Victoria in the pre-dawn hours of January 2, 2008. When the first frantic phone calls came in – mostly in Spanish – the three telecommunicators realized immediately that a large response involving many agencies would be necessary. They alerted Fire Chief Vance Riley and then began coordinating first responders, tow vehicles, incident command staff, mutual aid units and more. The three worked together to pinpoint the exact location and respond to requests from staff on scene. Their work facilitated the transfer of 47 patients to hospitals in about 80 minutes.

**Private/Public Provider Award – Bulverde-Spring Branch EMS** for its commitment to community and to high ethical standards. BSBEMS has adopted a mission statement borrowed

from a California program created by EMT students called ICARE, which stands for Integrity, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Empathy. Under Chief Scott Wilkinson, BSBEMS makes an effort to be an important part of the community by providing monthly CPR training to the public, opening the EMS building for civic meetings and inviting the public to get to know EMS personnel “over a cup of coffee.” BSBEMS also serves as a training center for not only BSBEMS students but those from other areas for ride-outs. BSBEMS stands out as a positive example of how an EMS provider can function within a rapidly growing community.

**EMS Person Award – Warren Porter, LP**, for his unwavering commitment to making sure the job gets done and his advocacy of all patients, young and old. The nomination cited in particular Porter’s dedication to evacuees in the aftermath of hurricanes Gustav and Ike at the Dallas Convention Center. He worked tirelessly from the first day and even as others prepared to leave when the shelter closed, Porter stayed on to help one more evacuee find a place for her special-needs husband. Porter was not leaving, it seems, until every issue had



*Taylor Fire Department took home the EMS First Responder honors.*

been handled. Porter also is an active participant on the Dallas Children's Hospital Preshospital Committee and has initiated programs to improve nursing home evacuations if ever necessary. A colleague says whatever he does, Porter provides "constant, unwavering, reliable support."

**GETAC's Journey of Excellence – Thelma Lemley** (posthumous) for her unblinking support and enthusiastic work to improve patient care and build the EMS/trauma system. The award reads "Every patient who enters the EMS and trauma system in Texas



*San Antonio AirLife took top honors for EMS Air Medical Service.*



*State EMS Director Maxie Bishop, right, stands with Warren Porter, who won the EMS Person Award.*



*Ed Racht, left, accepts GETAC's Journey of Excellence Award from Interim GETAC Chair Pete Wolf. Another Journey of Excellence Award was given posthumously to Thelma Lemley.*

will feel her hand on their shoulder." Thelma was selfless, seemingly inexhaustible and... relentless when in pursuit of a goal during the 40 years she worked in public health. She was stubborn, compassionate and outspoken – whether it was giving immunizations, inspecting ambulances, teaching teenagers about DWI or serving as a board member of the RAC. She leaves a legacy that will be nearly impossible to surpass. (Lemley passed away on September 8, 2008.)

**GETAC's Journey of Excellence – Ed Racht, MD**, for the "amazing effect one person can have on the

lives of others." GETAC Chair Racht recently took a job in Georgia, which will mean his resignation from GETAC. Council members honored Racht's tremendous leadership throughout the last eight years as chair of GETAC. Racht is often cited for his ability to bring people together and to find a compromise amid the inevitable disagreements. He tackled the role of GETAC chair with grace and humility, even when things got heated. He believed that a solution could be worked out every time. Racht left a permanent mark on EMS and trauma in Texas. His achievements will be felt for many years.

GETAC's Journey of Excellence

is given by the chair and vice chair of GETAC to individuals who consistently demonstrate a keen ability to work through complex problems involving many different organizations and individuals, with a focus on providing a better environment for patient care. The award is unique because it emphasizes not only *what* a person does; it also recognizes *how* a person accomplishes the goals.

– Kelly Harrell

**See you in  
Fort Worth  
2009!**