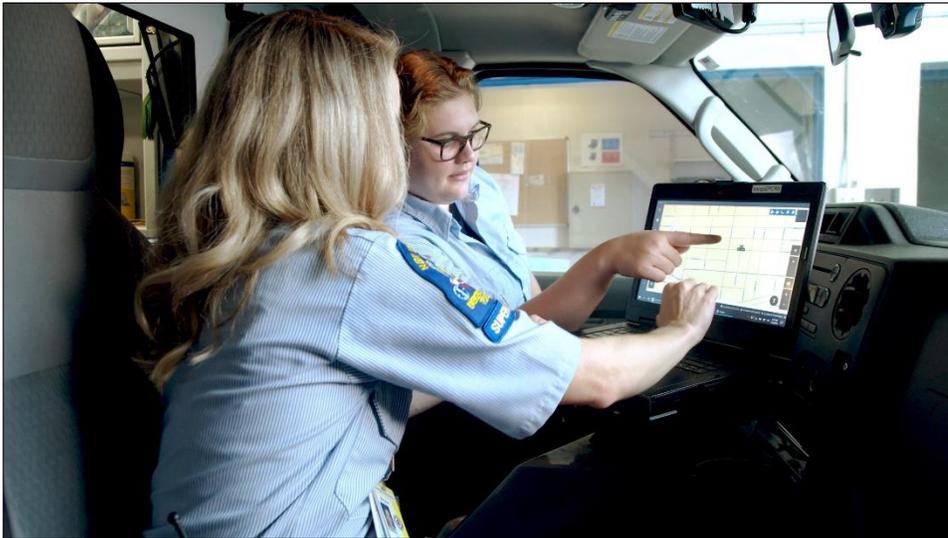


Newsletter

July 2021

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Volume 5, Edition 7



Expanding coverage for Bangs Ambulance in NY

Bangs Ambulance in Ithaca, NY, found that subscribing to FirstNet gave its agency better cell coverage. Watch to see what happened when they tested FirstNet MegaRange™. [WATCH VIDEO](#).

Helping Bangs Ambulance stay connected, keep community safe

By **George Tamborelle**

Paramedic Supervisor, Bangs Ambulance

As a paramedic supervisor, I keep track of the crews, the resources we have available here at Bangs Ambulance. I have to make sure we have enough staffing each day to get the job done. And as a scene supervisor, it's my job to go out and assist the crews on any call that that would need an extra set of hands.

We're in constant contact with our 9-1-1 dispatch center and fire, EMS and police units. And our 800 megahertz radio system is usually pretty reliable. But there are some areas where our communication system would just drop offline. We wouldn't be able to ask for the resources that we needed or coordinate with the hospitals or the

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Expanding FirstNet fleet of dedicated deployable assets

100+ portable assets – including communications vehicles, micro SatCOLTs – to support first responders

By **AT&T**

Public safety's dedicated fleet of deployable network assets is growing. Now, public safety has access to a dedicated fleet of more than 100 land-based and airborne portable cell sites, all at no additional charge.

"This is a strategic investment in public safety's network," said Edward Parkinson, CEO, FirstNet Authority.

"The FirstNet Authority set this in motion last year by [directing network investments](#) to expand the FirstNet fleet of deployables. Since launching the FirstNet network in 2018, the FirstNet Authority has worked with AT&T to increase the number of deployables from 72 to now over 100 mobile assets available to FirstNet users."

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RESPONDER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Learning to recognize burnout before it burns you

By **Annie Patterson**

Project/Program Manager, FirstNet Demo Program

and **Dr. Anna Courie**

Director, Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T

First responders face physically, mentally, and emotionally taxing work daily. It's the nature of the job, which consistently has them putting the needs of their community before their own. This often exposes them to potentially threatening situations. And the effects of the constant and continuous exposure to these stressors over the course of their career will start to pop up in different aspects of their life.

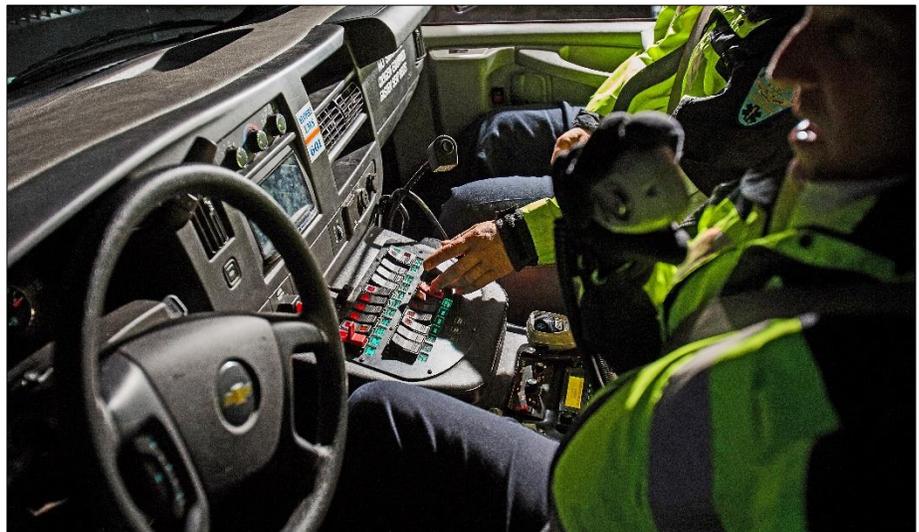
Many first responders experience increased stress, depression, and anxiety following exposure to critical incidents. Reports show that about 85% of first responders have experienced symptoms attributed to mental health conditions. And first responders experience depression and PTSD at a rate of up to five times that of the general population.¹ Demanding schedules, threatening conditions, and mental, physical, and spiritual stress can contribute to job burnout.

What is burnout?

The World Health Organization defines burnout as an occupational phenomena that results from unmanaged chronic workplace stress. It's characterized by the following three dimensions:

- Feelings of energy depletion and exhaustion,
- Increased mental distance from the job or feelings of cynicism or negativity related to the job
- And reduced professional efficacy²

Burnout heightens in those who have more demanding and stressful careers, such as first responders. And it's also an umbrella term, covering three main different types of burnout. These include individual burnout, interpersonal



Reports show that about 85% of first responders have experienced symptoms attributed to mental health conditions.

burnout, and organizational burnout.³

Individual burnout results from a person placing high standards on themselves and the subsequent feeling of failing to meet those standards. **Interpersonal burnout** refers to the compounding stress one experiences at work with the addition of a difficult coworker or boss.

Finally, poor organizational culture and extreme demands from the job cause **organizational burnout**.

Such demands can make a person feel as though they aren't meeting the proper standards in their day to day job performance.⁴

Burnout can result from a singular type, or from a combination of the three. To mitigate the effects of burnout, you need to identify the type(s) of burnout so you can combat the effects.

Recognizing signs of burnout

Burnout is insidious and can contribute to personal dissatisfaction and decreasing job performance. But you can learn to recognize the signs and manage it with healthy habits.

According to the CDC, the major

signs of burnout include sadness, depression, apathy, being easily frustrated, irritability, blaming of others, feeling indifferent or lacking feelings, isolation and disconnection from others, poor self-care, feelings of exhaustion or extreme tiredness, being overwhelmed, and feeling like a failure and that nothing they do can or will help.⁵

While many of the signs of burnout may sound similar to what anyone would experience after a particularly stressful day of work, it's caused by *prolonged stress*.

And it's often not triggered by a singular event, unless that event stretches over a period of time.

Burnout can also present itself as physical symptoms. These include increased instances of heart disease, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, and an increased vulnerability to illnesses.⁶ If you're experiencing any of the physical, mental, or emotional symptoms listed above, see a doctor or a mental health professional to determine the best way to address and treat the symptoms.

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RESPONDER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Learning to recognize burnout before it burns you

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Mitigating burnout

The experience of burnout can vary from one person to the next. But there are general mitigation techniques you can try in order to handle job burnout.⁷ So, it's important to consider all of the options when it comes to handling burnout, as there is no "one size fits all" option.

The most important step is to evaluate your options. Take a step back and evaluate what parts of the job are leading to burnout. This could be through an interactive process with your supervisor. It is also important to seek support. This can be from coworkers or from friends or loved ones. Support and collaboration with people can often help people cope with burnout. Social support structures facilitate feelings of connectedness, purpose, gratitude, and joy — all which help mitigate symptoms of burnout.

And if your employer offers any sort of employee assistance program, this can be a valuable tool, as well.

Relaxing activities, such as yoga or meditation, can help you deal with the effects of burnout, especially when done surrounding a particularly stressful event. Regular exercise is important, as well. It helps to offset the physical effects of burnout and has a positive mental benefit. Finally, it is important to practice mindfulness. This allows you to be more aware of what you are experiencing and feeling at any given moment.

Resources for first responders

First responders face unique challenges and stressors in their daily job tasks. So, it is important to seek out resources that can help you understand and address the unique challenges you face. The FirstNet® app catalog has several apps that can help with the mental, physical, and spiritual burdens facing responders, and some of the symptoms of burnout.



The experience of burnout can vary from one person to the next. But there are general mitigation techniques you can try in order to handle job burnout.⁷ So, it's important to consider all of the options, as there is no "one size fits all" option.

- **ResponderRel8⁸** is an app that allows first responders to anonymously connect with others working in the field
- **The Better App⁹** focuses specifically on mental health, as well as improving sleep. It offers an emotional needs checklist that works to identify specific areas of your emotional and physical wellbeing that can be improved upon.
- **Better Stop Suicide App¹⁰** is an app designed to tackle the growing problem of suicide by offering resources that focus on emotional health.
- **Lighthouse Health and Wellness¹¹** is an app that provides on-hand, in-demand 100% confidential health and wellness resources at no cost to first responders. *An agency code is required to access this resource. New agencies can request access codes through the website: <https://www.lighthousehw.org/contact-us/>.*
- **BJA Valor Officer Safety App¹²** is an app that promotes mental and physical health to help law enforcement officers successfully meet the needs to the communities they are serving. Designed specifically for

responders on the go, this provides access to valuable resources on mental and physical wellness from anywhere a responder might find themselves.

The International Public Safety Association (IPSA) also offers a prerecorded webinar specifically looking at burnout through a public safety lens¹³. It offers a closer look at how to identify burnout, as well as what you can do to alleviate it. Go to: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/4771623569122864899>

Your communities need you

First responders dedicate their lives to being there for their communities. Their job presents unique challenges that they have chosen to take on to protect those around them. While mental health and burnout may not be topics people want to talk about, it's important to continue to address them in the workplace.

By making these a more normalized topic of discussion, workplaces are supporting their employees and the communities they serve – helping to ensure that those responding to calls are performing at their best potential. While first responders are there to serve the communities, it is up to the communities to serve them, as well,

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FLEET EXPANSION

Expanding FirstNet fleet of deployable assets to support public safety

(Continued from Page 1)

Only [FirstNet, Built with AT&T](#), has dedicated assets to provide fire, EMS, law enforcement and more with unthrottled access to connectivity when and where you need it. This can be in the immediate aftermath of a storm or other disaster, when commercial power and other infrastructure may be down.

The new assets

Here's a breakdown of the new additions:

- We've **stationed 3 Communications Vehicles (CVs)** across the country to provide an extra-level of communications support, beyond the standard deployable asset for first responders when needed. You can use these new assets for emergency deployments or planned events such as [training exercises](#). These assets provide connectivity via LTE (high-quality Band 14 spectrum) and/or Wi-Fi similar to a Satellite Cell on Light Truck (SatCOLT).

They give you an air-conditioned command space for 2 first responder communications personnel, multiple monitors, a television and charging stations, and a large exterior screen and speakers for briefings. We've also equipped the CVs with a generator that can run for multiple days before refueling. Plus, the CVs include a lavatory, microwave, mini refrigerator and sleeping bunk – for those long deployments in the harshest of conditions.

- We've **stationed 4 Micro SatCOLTs** out West to support you during the 2021 wildfire season. The micro SatCOLTs are similar to the [Compact Rapid Deployables](#) available to agencies to own. And a single technician can deploy the asset within a matter of minutes once onsite. Their agility makes them ideal for supporting firefighters on the front lines as they adjust to wildfire's unpredictable nature.



- FirstNet supports America's entire public safety community. That means first responders in *all 50* states, 5 territories and the District of Columbia. By collaborating with local network providers in each region, we have dedicated assets stationed in Puerto Rico and the [3 Pacific territories](#). And we've **added 2** new portable assets in the U.S. Virgin Islands to provide immediate support.
- We've also **added 10 SatCOLTs** to provide first responders capabilities and connectivity similar to a cell tower. They're housed across more than 50 locations nationwide to enable a 14-hour delivery window following the initial emergency request.

The FirstNet fleet can also go airborne with [3 FirstNet Flying COWs](#) and the [FirstNet One](#) aerostat.

FirstNet One is a first-of-its-kind public safety communications solution that can fly up to 1,000 feet and replace multiple ground-based portable cell sites, making them available to deploy elsewhere. In addition to the FirstNet

fleet, public safety can also tap into the 300+ assets, from the [AT&T Network Disaster Recovery \(NDR\)](#) fleet when available. The AT&T NDR program is one of the largest, most advanced of its kind with more than \$650 million invested in the U.S. and another \$15 million invested internationally.

Why is this important?

The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season shattered records as the most active ever. And the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has once again predicted an above-normal season. Plus, extremely dry conditions in the West have primed the region for another potent wildfire season. So it's never been more important for public safety to have deployable solutions dedicated to you – no matter where your mission takes you.

"When disaster strikes, FirstNet is there to support first responders. It's as simple as that," said Jason Porter, President, Public Sector and the FirstNet Program at AT&T. "We've expanded the FirstNet fleet to provide

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FLEET EXPANSION

Expanding FirstNet fleet of deployable assets to support public safety

(Continued from Page 4)

even more portable cell sites, as well as to introduce new types of assets to help public safety stay mission ready. FirstNet is the only network that has assets fully dedicated to support America's first responders, and we will continue to be at-the-ready for those who put their lives on the line to protect and serve their communities – no matter the emergency.”

So far this year, public safety has requested support **more than 200 times** for planned and emergency events covering everything from [COVID-19 vaccination centers](#) to winter storms.

The Response Operations Group (ROG), a team of former first responders, guides deployment of the [FirstNet deployable assets](#), as well as the [‘ROG the Dog’ assisted therapy animals](#). Their intimate understanding of the public safety mission sets FirstNet apart. ROG works around the clock, 24x7x365, to help first responders stay connected and operate faster, safer and more effectively – especially when lives are on the line. This has made a meaningful, mission-impacting difference for thousands of first responders and hundreds of agencies across the country.

“Public safety identified mobile coverage as a ‘must have’ early in the development of FirstNet, and since then we have seen both an increased use of and demand for the fleet of dedicated portable cell sites,” said Parkinson. “The FirstNet Authority is pleased to deliver on our investments to expand the fleet and provide more innovative coverage solutions to public safety.”

Need FirstNet support?

Agencies on FirstNet can call 1-800-574-7000. When public safety calls for additional support, FirstNet ROG will work with the agency to assess the situation. They will either deploy one of the 100+ dedicated assets in the FirstNet fleet, or identify and provide alternate solutions that could better serve public safety. This could include

FirstNet is there to help when disaster strikes



First responders can stay mission-ready, as they work to protect their communities with access to new Communications Vehicles – part of the FirstNet growing fleet of deployable network assets. Watch as members of the Response Operations Group demonstrate the capabilities of the new communications vehicles. [WATCH VIDEO](#)



We've **stationed 3 Communications Vehicles (CVs)** across the country to provide an extra-level of communications support, beyond the standard deployable asset for first responders when needed.

expediting network restoration or quickly turning-up indoor coverage.

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¹As of April 2021

“Public safety identified mobile coverage as a ‘must have’ early in the development of FirstNet, and since then we have seen both an increased use of and demand for the fleet of dedicated portable cell sites. The FirstNet Authority is pleased to deliver on our investments to expand the fleet and provide more innovative coverage solutions to public safety.”

Edward Parkinson
CEO, FirstNet Authority

Helping Bangs Ambulance stay connected, keep community safe

(Continued from Page 1)

9-1-1 center to get those additional resources. And that's where FirstNet® is helping us.

Coordinating with the hospital

If we have a patient that we need to take to a specialty resource center, we have to coordinate with the local hospital and then coordinate with the receiving facility. Many times that becomes difficult in a rural setting, because the other resource hospitals don't have our radio channels. And we have to handle that communication via a phone or some kind of a data link.

Plus, we're seeing a higher population density out in our rural areas, which means we're responding further out. People are calling for things that they didn't historically call for. Ithaca is not a large city. But people do like to move further out away from the population center. So, once you get out into those areas, communication can become very spotty.

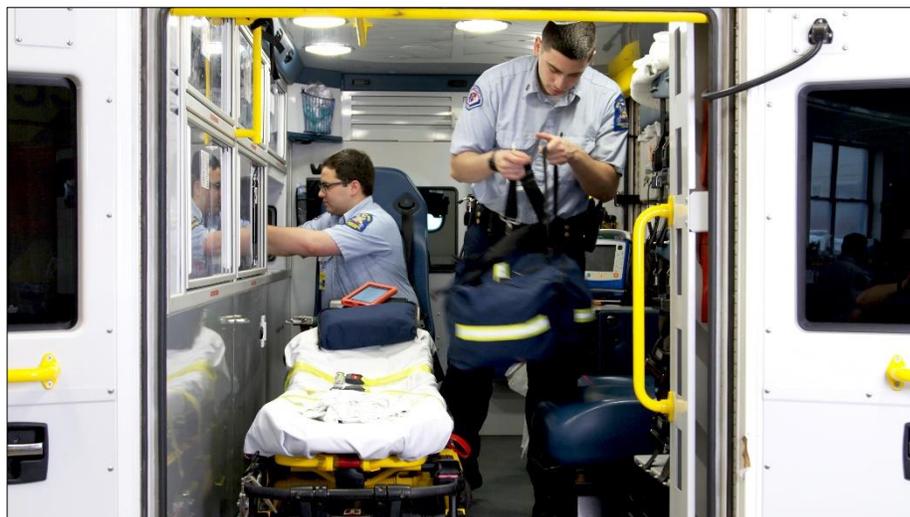
Without reliable communication, there are several risks. There is a safety risk if we need more resources – like a law enforcement agency, or a fire response – and we can't call for those additional resources. We also have the other side of it – getting that patient, to the facility that can best suit their needs.

Expanding needs for COVID-19

People are calling for illnesses that they didn't use to activate 9-1-1 for – like mild trauma and lacerations. And we're ending up further out in these rural settings.

We are also seeing a lot more of the COVID-19 calls because of the pandemic. People do not want to go to the hospital. So we need to coordinate and reassure them. If they're having a cardiac issue, but they're afraid to go, we coordinate with the hospital. We do that via phone to keep it more private and protect the patient's confidentiality.

So, where we would historically travel to a patient and take them to the hospital,



"Without reliable communication, there are several risks. There is a safety risk if we need more resources – like a law enforcement agency, or a fire response – and we can't call for those additional resources," says George Tamborelle, Paramedic Supervisor, Bangs Ambulance.

now we're doing more telemedicine. We're talking to the physicians at the hospital and coordinating resources to get that patient where they need to be rather than travel to the hospital for care.

For example, if we have a cardiac patient who's got a history of atrial fibrillation, we would contact the hospital by phone with that reliable connection and talk to the doctor. We would send an EKG over the data link to the hospital. They'll be able to see that EKG and see there is no change from the previous EKG and advise that person to follow up with their primary care physician.

Helping transmit critical data

There's a lot of information that needs to pass between the paramedic doing the transport or on the scene and the doctors at the hospital. We need to send 12-lead EKGs. We need to send vital signs to them. And all of that can go over that link. But that link has to be reliable at all times.

We can't drop that transmission. If we do, then the data gets lost or we have to re-send it. And that takes additional time. If we get it right the first time and

get that data across on the link, then the doctors can quickly make those decisions. What we don't want is to be sitting on the scene for an extended period of time, trying to make a transport decision. We need that information immediately.

FirstNet is helping us by providing a more reliable means of communication to the physicians, to the resource centers. It allows us to transmit the EKG, the vital signs to the hospitals to make those transport decisions quickly. The last thing we want is to start transporting to a local facility when a facility further away would be more appropriate.

Historically, we haven't been able to get the cell coverage. With FirstNet MegaRange™, we have that reliable communication all the way to the receiving facilities. So, we can continuously update the providers at those receiving facilities on the patient's status and interventions we've done. And we can give them an up-to-date estimated time of arrival. So, they're ready for us.

With that new service, it's amazing

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RESPONDER HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Learning to recognize burnout before it burns you

(Continued from Page 3)

by making sure they provide resources and opportunities to combat burnout for those who need it.

Annie Patterson is a Project/Program Management Specialist with the FirstNet Demo Program. She is a 2020 graduate of Roanoke College with a major in sociology concentrating in crime and deviance and a minor in Spanish. Annie is a passionate advocate for first responders because she has seen first-hand how selfless and willing to help others they are. And she believes that it is important to advocate for those who dedicate their lives to helping others in difficult circumstances.

Dr. Anna Fitch Courie, Director of Responder Wellness, FirstNet Program at AT&T, is a nurse, Army wife, former university faculty, and author. Dr. Courie has worked for over 20 years in the health care profession including Bone Marrow Transplant, Intensive Care, Public Health, and Health Promotion practice. Dr. Courie holds a Bachelor's in Nursing from Clemson University; a Master's in Nursing Education from the University of Wyoming; and a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Ohio State University. Dr. Courie's area of expertise is integration of public health strategy across disparate organizations to achieve health improvement goals.



By making mental health a more normalized topic of discussion, workplaces are supporting their employees and the communities they serve – helping to ensure those responding to calls are performing at their best.

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¹<https://business.kaiserpermanente.org/insights/mental-health-workplace/first-responder-support>

²<https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>

³<https://rescuetime.wpengine.com/burnout-syndrome-recovery/#Burnout-definition>

⁴<https://rescuetime.wpengine.com/burnout-syndrome-recovery/#Burnout-definition>

⁵<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

⁶<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>

⁷<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>

⁸<https://responderrel8.com/>

⁹<https://thebetterappcompany.com/>

¹⁰<https://thebetterappcompany.com/better-stop-suicide>

¹¹<https://www.lighthousehw.org/>

¹²<https://www.valorforblue.org/VALOR-App>

¹³<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/4771623569122864899>

Helping Bangs Ambulance stay connected with FirstNet MegaRange

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because we don't drop that connection. We can make those phone calls.

We can get those resources that we need. And we can make sure that we're providing the best patient care that we can.

Seeking positive outcomes

Some of the situations where we need connectivity are life and death. If we can't transmit that EKG and the doctor decides that that patient needs to go to a

specialty resource, it could be a life or death situation. If we start transporting to the closest facility, we are heading in the wrong direction.

Without that reliable connection – to get the information to our hospital, for them to say, go to a different hospital – it's a matter of minutes between a positive and a negative outcome.

Recently, we had a patient who was in a rural area, and we were able to keep that link, transmit that data. The patient was having a STEMI – an

active heart attack. Because we were able to transmit that data, the cardiac team met us in the emergency room.

And 10 minutes after we got the patient to the emergency room, they had them in the Cath lab doing the intervention.

The outcome was positive, and the patient is in recovery.

George Tamborelle is a paramedic supervisor with Bangs Ambulance in Ithaca, NY, and has been a paramedic for 24 years.