

# *Virginia Department of Health*

## *News Release*

*Protecting You and Your Environment*

109 Governor Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219 • [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **GOVERNOR KAINE RECOGNIZES GARY CRITZER WITH HIGHEST EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES HONOR**

*Additional Awards Given to EMS Providers Throughout the State*

(RICHMOND, VA)—Governor Timothy Kaine recognized Gary Critzer of Waynesboro with the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Emergency Medical Services (EMS), the highest award issued by the Commonwealth to EMS personnel. Since 1986, the Governor’s EMS Awards have been given annually to recognize and honor some of the best EMS providers, administrators, instructors, agencies and organizations in the Commonwealth. Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marilyn Tavenner joined EMS Director Gary Brown in presenting the awards to all of the Governor’s EMS Award recipients. The awards were presented at the recent Governor’s EMS Awards Banquet during Virginia Department of Health Office of EMS’s 28<sup>th</sup> Annual EMS Symposium in Norfolk. More than 1,900 EMS providers attended this year’s symposium.

“EMS providers have been in the background of the public health arena for years, yet they serve the Commonwealth on a daily basis and quickly step forward when responding to national catastrophes such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the events of September 11, 2001 and the Virginia Tech shooting,” said Secretary Tavenner. “We rely on EMS to be there for large scale responses, as well as everyday emergencies.

Critzer was honored for over 30 years of dedication to the improvement of EMS in Virginia. His roles have included service as a paramedic, creating improvements in EMS communications regionally, work strengthening the Central Shenandoah EMS Council while serving as its president, enhancing educational opportunities for both instructors and providers, and sharing his experiences and perspectives on numerous boards and committees, including the Governor’s EMS Advisory Board and subcommittees. Critzer manages his numerous commitments effortlessly, while serving as the emergency management director for the City of Waynesboro—and simultaneously campaigning for improvements in the Virginia EMS system to assist the providers maintain the high quality of the pre-hospital patient care provided to their communities.

Critzer received one of 11 awards presented during the evening. The other Governor’s Awards

were presented to individuals, EMS agencies and community organizations that help serve and protect the Commonwealth. The winners were chosen from a large pool of remarkable candidates nominated by their respective Regional EMS Councils.

The other 2007 winners include:

Outstanding Pre-hospital Provider –Eric Lasky, Fredericksburg

Outstanding EMS Physician –Dr. Peter Bruzzo, Marion

Outstanding Pre-hospital Instructor –Colonel Robert Ditch, Yorktown

Nurse with Outstanding Contributions to EMS –Linda Baker, R.N., Virginia Beach

Outstanding EMS Administrator –Battalion Chief Thomas Schwalenberg, Yorktown

Outstanding EMS Agency –Chancellor Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Spotsylvania

Outstanding Contribution to EMS –Norfolk Fire Explorer Post 116, Norfolk

Outstanding Contribution to EMS for Children –Doris Foster, Portsmouth

Outstanding Contribution to EMS Telecommunications –Ta-Tanisha Farmer, Danville

Outstanding Contribution to EMS by a High School Senior –Bryant Gray, St. Stephens Church

For more information on the Governor’s EMS Awards and the 2007 winners, please visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems)

**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Media release features Governor’s awards winners in your circulation area.