



## FRIENDS ON THE FRONTLINES

A feature of our brave chamber members out there working to keep us safe, healthy and fed.

### Cypress Creek EMS



#### Interviewees:

Norm Uhl(Public Information Officer, Cypress Creek EMS)

#### How long have you been a first responder?

I personally am not. I'm the Public Information Officer. Cypress Creek EMS has been the 911 EMS responder for our area since 1975. We cover an area of 177+ square miles with approximately 600,000 residents. That's larger in land mass and population than the city limits of Atlanta, Georgia.

#### When you are responding to calls, do you have to ask screener questions to determine if the caller has possibly been exposed?

Yes, our call takers and dispatchers started off asking about travel and now we ask about possible exposure and ask specific questions to determine whether symptoms indicate a possible COVID-19 patient. That's so we can give our field crews a heads up. The Cypress Creek EMS Communications handles 911 and dispatch for 16 other agencies including the Spring Fire Department, Klein Fire Department, Champions Fire Department, Ponderosa Fire Department, Cypress Creek Fire Department and all of the departments within our coverage area run on medical calls with us. Not all calls, mostly the serious ones such as cardiac arrest.

**If you have reason to believe you are responding to a COVID patient, do you have to wear PPE?**

If we are responding to a potential COVID patient our field crews wear PPE. For regular patient contact we always wear safety glasses and now we are also wearing surgical masks for non COVID patient contact.

**Have you responded to any COVID patients yet?**

Yes, CCEMS has responded to quite a few suspect COVID cases.

**Does the possibility of dealing with COVID patients add stress to an already stressful job?**

For our field crews, yes, definitely.

**Is there something that the public can do to help protect you from COVID when responding to a call?**

Tell us if anyone in the household may have had contact with a COVID patient.

**What would you like to tell us about your efforts that we have not asked?**

This morning there was a photo shoot at Klein High School that featured many of the first responders from our area including CCEMS, several fire departments and law enforcement agencies. Bryan Anderson was the photographer. He's been doing a series of group pictures including Houston, Dayton and Lufkin. We have also recently added two full time ambulances for a total of 17 full time and 1 peak ambulance. As an example we added Medic 514 which is housed in Spring Fire Station 74 on Aldine Westfield.

