



Karl Anderson

## Cypress Creek EMS, Medical Director take home state awards for service

Cypress Creek EMS Director Levon Vartanian was recently awarded Texas EMS Medical Director of the year.

Posted: Tuesday, December 6, 2011 11:09 am

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For Cypress Creek EMS Medical Director Dr. Levon Vartanian, providing emergency medical services isn't just a job, it's "in my blood", he said.

That's why Vartanian said he was humbled, but not surprised, by being named the EMS Medical Director of the Year by the Texas Department of State Health Services on Nov. 22.

"It's a recognition that's dear to me ... I'm passionate about delivering emergency medicine to my community," Vartanian said. "When you do something with a passion, it's easy to do."

Vartanian started his career as a paramedic before going to medical school, which he credits for his passion.

"Once you're a paramedic, it's in your blood and it's a part of you," Vartanian said. "I always aspired to be a physician first, but I fell upon EMS work during my pre-med studies at Baylor, and fell in love with the excitement and adrenaline rush that goes into emergency care."

Cypress Creek EMS also won EMS Provider of the Year in the state, and Vartanian said that his people, not his passion, is what made that happen.

"It's the people who are a part of it that really makes this work; we're all here to do what we love," Vartanian said.

Cypress Creek has 159 paid employees, as well as 143 volunteers on the roster, Executive Director Bradley England said. England said Vartanian was recognized for his "hands-on" training, research, and work with crews.

"We're a very aggressive service, because Dr. Vartanian lets us do what we need to do in the field," England said. "He does a lot of research that enables us to put new medication on our units."

Some of his research has led to "best practices" in EMS care like bypassing the ER with cardiac patients and going straight to the catheter labs, and using new equipment called "rescue pods", devices that allow airway ventilation so patients can continue breathing, England said.

"We have a 97 percent success rate with bypassing the ER," England said. "If a person comes into a hospital with chest pain, by the time they get their labs and checked out and head to the ER, the response time's about 90 minutes. With what we do, we get that to less than 80 minutes."

The shorter response time was due to paramedic training with cardiac doctors in the area, England said, and it's Vartanian's experience that's helped them do that.

"He knows the paramedic's role, and he knows our hands are tied," England said. "Back in the day, we'd have to wait on calls from nurses or doctors in the field, and now we don't have to do that."

England said the support of the communities Cypress Creek EMS serves also makes the job easy.

"We came from the community; we started in 1975 with a group of people in the community who wanted to help out," England said. "The community has always been a big supporter of us, and we're always well received. Our two boards, E.S.D. #11 and Cy-Creek, work really well together, too."

Cypress Creek EMS won the award for state provider of the year in 1985, and then nationally in 1986, England said. Vartanian won the award for director two years ago, and England won the award for administrator of the year in 1995.

The awards, Vartanian said, just inspire him to do more.

"It's a blessing," Vartanian said. "It makes me want to do this forever."

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