

ICE YOUR CELL

Emergency Personnel urges cell phone users to add ICE Numbers

In 2003, close to 900,000 emergency victims in the United States were unable to provide contact information to emergency room personnel. While the vast majority of people don't carry any emergency contact information with them, there are over 110 million people in the United States who use a cell phone.

Covenant HealthCare, in partnership with Mobile Medical Response and LifeNet of Michigan, are launching a local campaign to encourage their staffs, as well as the entire community, to ICE their cell phone and other wireless devices in the event of an accident.

ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency". Adding ICE to a cell phone is quick and easy and allows first responders and/or medical personnel to quickly contact a designated person who can be informed of a family member or friend's involvement in an accident.

British paramedic Bob Brotchie created the concept of ICE so that when people are taken to hospital emergency rooms and can't give information about themselves, there is some clue as to who should be contacted. A campaign was launched in May 2005 in England but had limited impact until the first series of the recent London bombings. The explosions left many victims unidentifiable, which sparked an e-mail campaign to spread the ICE idea around the world.

"When I first received the e-mail, I thought it was a great potential lifesaving idea," states Christine Bergman, APR, Covenant HealthCare Public Relations Specialist. "After verifying the e-mail was not a hoax, we began talking about the importance it could play here, throughout the greater Saginaw Valley region, with first responders as well as with emergency room staff.

"We thought it made a lot of sense and could potentially save a life."

A single entry, or multiple entries can be created in the phone's memory with the acronym ICE (In Case of Emergency) with the contact person's name and number. For example: ICE - Dad, 333-123-4567; ICE - Spouse, 444-123-4567; ICE - 1, 555-123-4567; ICE - 2, 666-123-4567.

"Anytime we can enhance the ability of EMS crews to obtain additional information or contact family members, it positively impacts our ability to provide the best patient care possible," explained Jay Cooper, EMT-P, Director of Operations at MMR.

As students head off to college and children return to school, entering an ICE number onto their cell phone can deliver additional peace of mind for parents and guardians. Should an incident occur, ICE can allow first responders to contact a designated relative or friend who could help provide vital personal information, including details of any medical conditions, especially when persons are not able to speak for themselves in an emergency situation.

Directions to ICE your cell phone: Type ICE followed by a contact name into your cell phone address book (for example, ICE - Mom or ICE - 1). Save their phone number. Multiple entries can be created.

Tell your ICE contact that you have designated them as a resource in the event of an emergency.