

# Virtua to hold EMT classes at RCBC

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STAFF WRITER

**MOUNT HOLLY** — First responders in the county will have the opportunity to receive advanced training under a new partnership with Rowan College at Burlington County.

The Burlington County Board of Freeholders passed a resolution at its meeting Wednesday entering into a shared-services agreement with RCBC, which is meant to take advantage of the college's partnership with Virtua, the Evesham-based nonprofit health care system.

The agreement will provide first responders with basic emergency medical technician training courses, as well as refresher courses and electives aimed to support the continuing education of active EMTs.

"This new partnership will allow our emergency medical responders to take advantage of world-class training and expert professional instruction," Freeholder Mary Ann O'Brien said. "We are hoping this will elevate their training

and capabilities, and allow them to provide even better service to our county residents."

The initiative will take effect in the fall. The Virtua classes will include EMT training, EMT/basic life support continuing education, paramedic training and paramedic/advanced life support.

Students will have the option to take courses in traditional classroom settings, online or via satellite locations, and in state-of-the-art simulation centers, O'Brien said.

Tabernacle Rescue Squad Chief George Jackson spoke at the meeting and commended the partnership. He praised Virtua, saying his rescue squad went through its training.

"The level of training is bar none — the expertise, the instructors that they bring, the knowledge base of their EMT instructors and their paramedics, and all their instructors that they use," Jackson said. "This is awesome for first responders and emergency medical services in the county."

The freeholders also pledged to

cover the cost of course materials for initial participants. The cost amounts to a \$200 scholarship to participants.

"Supporting our emergency medical responders is always a priority, and we are confident that this partnership will elevate their training and capabilities, ultimately allowing them to provide even better service and care to our residents," O'Brien said.

In related news, the county and Virtua received a New Jersey American Heartsaver Award that was presented to county and Virtua representatives at Wednesday's meeting.

The award is from the American Heart and American Stroke associations, and recognized both entities for their joint launch of the app PulsePoint, implemented last year.

PulsePoint alerts CPR-trained people in a public place to someone nearby in sudden cardiac arrest who may require CPR.

When a 911 call alerts dispatch to a cardiac arrest victim, the PulsePoint app is activated by the

county's public safety communications center, while simultaneously notifying emergency responders and Virtua paramedics. When activated, those within a quarter mile who have downloaded the app to their mobile device will receive a push notification on their smartphone with the location of the emergency, according to county officials.

The app also provides the location of the nearest, known publicly accessible automated external defibrillator, officials said.

"So far, since we've implemented it, there have been 15 notifications and alerts that a layperson has helped respond to before our EMTs and emergency personnel have gotten there. So this is doing something that is truly life-impacting and changing for families here in the county of Burlington," said Scott Casper, Virtua's assistant vice president of emergency services, at the meeting.

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