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**Mount Laurel Twp.  
Emergency Medical  
Services**

# Press Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### ***Mount Laurel Township Emergency Medical Services, Acquires Bariatric Patient Transport Equipment***

**Mount Laurel, NJ- , June 8, 2011:** Mount Laurel Township Emergency Medical Services (MLEMS) has placed Bariatric Transport Equipment into service for use in ambulances. This Bariatric Equipment includes a set of ramps and winch with a weight capacity of 1400 pounds used to load/unload the stretcher with a bariatric patient into the rear of a ambulance without lifting and an ambulance electric power stretcher with added width, electric lift capacity of 700 pounds and maximum transport weight capacity of 1000 pounds to safely and comfortably accommodate bariatric patients body mass. Two ambulances were modified to accommodate this specialty equipment use and staff training on the use of this new equipment is currently on going. Additional patient movement equipment was purchased to also accommodate bariatric patient movement from inside a residence to the specialized bariatric stretcher. Most ambulance stretchers and moving equipment are designed for weight capacities of 400 pounds or less. This Bariatric Equipment was purchased by Mount Laurel EMS, Inc., the voluntary, non-profit, 501c3 arm of Mount Laurel Township EMS to provide a safe and respectful way of transporting bariatric patients (400 to 1000 pound patients) to the hospital. It is MLEMS intent to make this Bariatric Transport Equipment and Ambulances available as a regional resource to all EMS Agencies in Burlington County. "We believe this is the first true Bariatric Capable Transport Unit in Burlington County" according to Deborah Rixon, President of MLEMS, Inc. Since placing this Bariatric equipment into service the bariatric unit has already been utilized twice to respond to 9-1-1 calls for service to transport bariatric patients safely and with dignity in just its first week of operation. The county radio designation for this new unit is "Bariatric Unit 36".

**For Release 8 a.m.. EDT, June 9, 2011**

“Bariatrics” is defined as the branch of medicine concerned with the treatment of obesity. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control “An estimated 120 million Americans or 64% are overweight or obese”. The Rand Corporation states “the portion of Americans that suffer clinically severe obesity (defined as those who are 100 or more pounds overweight) is rising twice as fast as the proportions that are simply obese”. This new Bariatric Transport Equipment shall ensure that we have the appropriate tools locally to meet the increasing numbers of bariatric patients that will require this type of specialty EMS resource.

Mount Laurel Township Emergency Medical Services is a combination career and volunteer department that supplies basic life support ambulance service, community and professional training programs and disaster services to the township. The department is composed of approximately 120 volunteers and 30 career emergency services personnel that respond from Station 369, the Rodger Sharpe Building on Masonville Road and Station 368, and the Charles Kritz Building on South Church Street. Mount Laurel Township EMS operates seven ambulances, three first responder/command vehicles, a disaster medical supply trailer, a Incident Rehabilitation Trailer, a 4x4 Pickup Truck and a 15 passenger van. During 2010 Mount Laurel Township Emergency Medical Services was the busiest squad in Burlington County responding to over 4539 incidents, transporting approximately 3200 patients to area hospitals, driving approximately 90,000 Fleet Miles, and volunteering more than 30,000 hours.



Bariatric Ramps and winch attached to ambulance.



Picture of Winch pulling Bariatric Stretcher into ambulance during loading..



Ferno PowerFlex Ambulance Stretcher with Large Body Surface Area utilized to transport Bariatric Patients.

**\*\*\*\*\* Additional photos are available upon request**