

# **UW Health, Madison Fire Department: Partner to care for patients, keep EMS safe on the front lines of the pandemic**

Posted on Friday, Sep 24, 2021

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis. – Since the very first days of the COVID-19 pandemic, first responders have faced immediate risk of infection as they continued to provide care to our communities.

Throughout the last 19 months, members of local emergency medical services (EMS) are the first to arrive at scenes like a fire, car crash or in-home medical emergency, without any knowledge of the COVID-19 status of those in need of their support and medical care.

Even with these unknowns and increased risks, EMS partners have continued to provide care and protection to those in need.

Emergency medical services personnel have always put their lives on the line, but since March 2020, even the most traditionally routine emergency call can be a potentially life-threatening environment due to COVID-19, according to Dr. Megan Gussick, emergency medicine physician, UW Health, and medical director, Madison Fire Department.

“We can’t honor these individuals enough for the brave work they do during normal times, and now with the pandemic, their courage is magnified,” she said.

UW Health has long worked with area emergency agencies, like the Madison Fire Department, to train them to provide high quality and innovative prehospital care.

This training includes designing real-world simulations with state-of-the-art equipment like sophisticated mannequins, medical devices, tools and equipment that mimic the emergency scenarios that EMS may not regularly face and allows them to hone the skills to use in the field, Gussick said.

The partnership between the Madison Fire Department and UW Health has been found to be even more valuable during this pandemic because the department has been able to consult on everything from the latest federal and state COVID-19 guidelines to the most effective ways to stay safe while providing the best care to patients, according to Ché Stedman, assistant chief, medical affairs, Madison Fire Department.

“It’s been great to have UW Health and Dr. Gussick as a resource during the pandemic, which has been a real challenge to the department,” he said.