

## Administration

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Community Paramedicine makes great strides filling healthcare gaps in its first year

**May 9, 2019** – Fire Rescue’s Community Paramedicine program made great strides in its first year to fill the healthcare gaps within Flagler County.

The program, which started in April 2018, served 71 patients in its first year in Palm Coast, Bunnell, and Flagler Beach.

“I made 453 patient visits this past year,” said Caryn Prather, Flagler County’s community paramedic. “It’s been such a rewarding experience. I have the opportunity to visit with patients for about 30 minutes, and really assess what their needs are.”

Prather’s client base started with people who were frequent users of the 9-1-1 system for non-emergency medical needs and transportation to the hospital. Since its inception, these calls have decreased by 80 percent.

“As a road paramedic, I only had the opportunity to spend a couple of minutes with patients during transports to the hospital,” Prather said. “As Community Paramedic, I have enough time to really find out about what is happening in people’s lives. I make sure they understand what they are supposed to do with their medicines, and that they take them. I also have an opportunity to find out if there is food in the home and if there is power.”

In addition to bonding with clients, Prather has been forging alliances internally with all divisions of Social Services, and externally with the Flagler Health Department, AdventHealth Palm Coast, as well as organizations like ClearCaptions that help people with hearing or vision loss.

“It takes everyone to make this program successful,” Prather said. “We share information with one another so we can provide resources that are going to improve their lives. We’ve been able to help people get their power restored – which is sometimes a matter of that they forgot to pay their bill, and other times because they had to make a decision about whether to fill a prescription or to pay their light bill.”

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District 3

**Joe Mullins**  
District 4

**Donald O’Brien, Jr.**  
District 5

Work is underway to get one of Prather's patients a new trailer, because his current mobile home is old and beyond repairable.

"We have the best person in Flagler County doing this work for us," Deputy Fire Chief Joe King said of Prather. "She loves what she's doing and she cares so much. And people know that – they don't have to let her into their homes, but she hasn't been turned away once."

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