



# Know What 911 Responders Can Do For You

By Joe Steckler, *President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County*

In 2016, we did a television show of the Brevard County Fire and Rescue team from Station #62 in Sea Park (watch it at [helpingseniorsofbrevard.info/event/0622c-scgtv-hs052/](http://helpingseniorsofbrevard.info/event/0622c-scgtv-hs052/)). We shot the tape at the station with the ambulance in the background, and it was as realistic as possible. Right then I knew I wanted to write about 911 responders. And, since this was the team that responded to my stroke emergency in December 2013, I knew they were good.

### The importance of calling 911.

Time is critical, as responders can make things happen that cannot be done when you drive yourself or another to the hospital. If a person is considered unstable or potentially unstable, treatment can be started en route to the hospital. If it takes you 15 to 30 minutes to get to a hospital, and responders can get to your home in five minutes, the decision to call 911 becomes a no brainer. Responders prefer that you err on the side of making a call to ensure the patient gets the necessary treatment.

Many are reluctant to go to the hospital, especially during COVID-19, thereby delaying treatment of a possible heart attack or stroke. Let the paramedics make that decision. Since they are trained in the use of emergency equipment,

responders can administer critical treatments like using a cardiac defibrillator to restart your heart. Responders monitor the patient and communicate to emergency room staff while en route to the hospital so everyone is informed and prepared to administer the best care as quickly as possible.

### Understanding the Vial of Life program.

Brevard County Fire Rescue has a program whereby you can store important medical information in a vial in the refrigerator. The paper, once filled out by you, contains a short medical history, medication and insurance information, allergies, and other data to help the team treat you. You can obtain these free vials at any fire and rescue station. All responders are familiar with the program and know to look for the vial, so it is vital that we participate and keep our information updated – it will save valuable time for you and them. You can learn more about the Vial of Life at [HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org](http://HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org).

Knowing when to call 911 and having an updated Vial of Life in your home are tangible, possibly life saving actions. What is more intangible is your peace of mind knowing

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