

## CONNIE MEYER

### PARAMEDIC

#### Paramedic Connie Meyer

is fully capable of handling the big medical emergencies – heart failure, car accidents and the like – but if you were to ask her about the element of her job that leaves her most satisfied, she'd tell you that it's the small, everyday emergencies.

The people who don't last in this career feel they have to have the big calls and save somebody's life every time they go out, and that doesn't happen very often, Meyer explained. So you have to get your satisfaction from small things. Taking care of someone. Helping them out through a small emergency. She gives some examples:

“Someone who's fallen and broken their arm ...

“Or just a grandma who's lonely and doesn't know what else to do so she calls 911. She's alone ...

“Or when you can do the extra little things. Like this morning we had a lady who needed to go to the

hospital, but she had her dog there ... So we take time to make sure the dog has food and water and is taken care of.”

Meyer, a 20-year veteran of the Johnson County Med-Act in Olathe, Kansas, started out as an emergency medical technician (EMT). Using that certification as a springboard, she entered the paramedic program at Johnson County Community College in 1983 and has worked in the field ever since.

Meyer works hard to stay up to date on advancements and changes in the field through constant training.

“That entails either classroom training or hands-on training,” she said. “Last month we did pediatric training. And this month we'll finish pediatric, and we may do cardiac or trauma. It's just a variety of things. To keep the national registry (National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians), you have to



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do so many hours in different subjects, and part of that has to be hands-on practice.”

According to Meyer, patience, critical thinking and good communication skills are a must – as is physical strength and having realistic expectations of the job.

“Burnout is a problem,” she said, “especially if you're expecting the wrong thing out of the job, and you're not realistic about what the job involves. It doesn't always involve glory and praise and all of the things you think it might from watching TV.” *Sandra Moran*

## What's NREMT?

All 50 states require certification for each EMT level. The National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) sets standards for EMT training and EMT examinations. In most states and the District of Columbia, NREMT registration is required at some or all levels. Other states administer their own certification examination or provide the option of taking either the NREMT or state examination. For more information, see <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos101.htm#training> and [http://www.nremt.org/about/nremt\\_news.asp](http://www.nremt.org/about/nremt_news.asp).