



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF SCHENECTADY  
NEW YORK

City Hall, 105 Jay Street, Rm 111  
Schenectady, N.Y. 12305-1938  
Office: (518) 382-5000  
Cell: (518) 424-0483  
Fax: (518) 382-5272  
[gmccarthy@schenectadyny.gov](mailto:gmccarthy@schenectadyny.gov)

Gary R. McCarthy  
Mayor

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### PRESS RELEASE

# Schenectady Fire Department Launches Emergency Telemedicine Pilot Initiative

*City partners with United Concierge Medicine to offer virtual emergency care*

**SCHENECTADY** – The City of Schenectady has launched a telemedicine pilot initiative with United Concierge Medicine (UCM) to offer patients virtual emergency medical care. As part of Mayor Gary McCarthy’s Smart City initiatives, Schenectady Fire Department Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics started utilizing tablets in early November equipped with telemedicine software.

When Schenectady Fire Department EMS is dispatched, paramedics will assess the patient and now through UCM can perform a telehealth consult with emergency medical physicians, which often avoids a costly trip to the hospital emergency room. The UCM physicians are certified by the Regional Emergency Medical Organization (REMO).

Following the evaluation, SFD EMS and UCM may deploy numerous options, including treating the patient at home or recommending transport to an alternative setting, such as a primary care provider, a specialist, or an urgent care center, rather than a hospital emergency room.

“Hospital emergency rooms are often overcrowded with patients that may not need that level of care, and ambulances spending their time transporting those patients, rather than be at the ready for true emergencies,” **Mayor McCarthy said**. “Overuse of ERs and ambulances results in delays to emergency care that reduces the quality and efficiency of the healthcare system. Through smart city technologies, our community is better positioned to be a progressive leader for future sustainable innovation. Most important, patients will reap the benefit of better, more efficient care.”

“This partnership represents an innovative solution to an enormous public health challenge,” **said Keith Algozzine, PA-C, CEO of UCM Digital Health**. “By working together with innovative health plans, the City of Schenectady leadership and the Schenectady Fire Department, citizens will now have emergency medical treatment and triage in the palm of their hands. This will help ensure patients always get the right care, in the right place, at the right time when they call 911.”

In the first month of the initiative, SFD EMS has utilized UCM telemedicine on 41 calls, 70% of which were successfully treated at home. The software is currently equipped on Rescue One at Station One, Engine Two at Station Two, and most recently on Engine Four at Station Four.

The Schenectady Fire Department responds to approximately 18,000 calls per year. Historically, approximately 12,000 of those are medical calls, while the remaining calls are related to fires, rescues, or hazardous conditions. With 115 paramedics, the Schenectady Fire Department will be the first and the largest department in the region to offer this service.