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Richmond Ambulance Authority and FirstWatch Celebrate 15 Years Together

Richmond, Virginia – September 26, 2017 – The Richmond Ambulance Authority (RAA), was the first EMS agency in the world to implement the commercial version of FirstWatch, which at the time focused on biosurveillance. RAA and FirstWatch, now an industry leader in public safety data analytics and improvement, are pleased to announce the 15th anniversary of that first installation.

Only a year after the tragic events of 9/11, RAA initially installed FirstWatch to monitor 911 data for unusual trends and provide early warning for bioterrorist or chemical attacks. Jerry Overton, RAA's executive director at the time, said FirstWatch would be "a significant step in increasing our overall preparedness in these changing times." As an innovator in the EMS industry, RAA has continued to use FirstWatch in innovative ways to improve the system's operations and performance.

RAA was first established in 1991 under the Richmond Ambulance Authority Act to ensure the unified provision of EMS services for the City of Richmond as a self-operating, stand-alone, high performance public utility model. RAA's operating methodology and system efficiencies are based on the principles laid down by Jack Stout, the father of high-performance EMS, FirstWatch founder Todd Stout, and Jay Fitch, co-founder of Fitch & Associates.

"When we first integrated with RAA they were one of the most advanced EMS systems in the world, and they still are today," said Todd Stout, FirstWatch President. "RAA is a shining example of how to be a data-driven organization. We're privileged to have worked side-by-side with them for the last 15 years and witness how their use of data has evolved."

“FirstWatch has been a vital data system that has supported operations here at RAA for the last decade and a half,” said Chip Decker, RAA CEO. “Its biosurveillance, demand analysis and alert triggers have all helped us as we understand and respond to our citizens during their time of need.”

“FirstWatch has been a major public health tool for us over the years, whether it’s in the identification of syndromic conditions such as flu, mumps or even Ebola through to today’s clear and present danger – the opioid public health emergency,” said Rob Lawrence, RAA COO.

“EMS sits at the epicentre of this epidemic as we interact with virtually every overdose and its victim, he added. “The collective intelligence gathered by the FirstWatch platform has been a force multiplier in our efforts to support a solution to this epidemic.”

Over the years, RAA has used FirstWatch in a variety of innovative ways, from biosurveillance, to providing real-time situational awareness during natural disasters, analyzing demand and enhancing operational and clinical performance. The most recent addition has been FirstPass, helping them improve the QI processes, assessing clinical performance against protocols in virtually real-time.

Fifteen years after its original installation, RAA’s use of FirstWatch is still holding strong, said Lawrence, helping them watch over the City of Richmond.

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About the Richmond Ambulance Authority

In 1991, the Richmond City Council and the city manager implemented an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system that placed the patient first and guaranteed its performance to the City’s residents. Today, the Richmond Ambulance Authority responds to approximately 200 calls per day and transports, on average, 140 patients per day. RAA’s emergency response times are among the fastest in the nation with ambulances on the scene of life threatening emergencies in less than 8 minutes and 59 seconds in more than 90% of all responses. RAA is one of only 24 EMS agencies in North America accredited by both the Commission on the Accreditation of Ambulance Services and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch. RAA is also a Commonwealth of Virginia Accredited Dispatch Center. For more information, see www.raaems.org.

About FirstWatch:

FirstWatch, based in Carlsbad, Calif., began monitoring 911 data in Kansas City, MO. in 1999 as a custom-built application. On Sept 25, 2002 the Richmond Ambulance Authority was the first to use the commercial version of FirstWatch. Since then, FirstWatch has grown into a leader in real-time public safety data analysis, helping more than 400 communities across North America.

FirstWatch's Real-Time Situational Awareness System enables authorized users to monitor what's happening as events are unfolding, enabling quick action and response. FirstWatch is used to enhance situational awareness to protect the health and safety of emergency responders; to detect and alert public safety and health teams to pandemic disease or bioterrorism; and to enable public safety agencies to monitor operational performance to ensure the efficient and responsible use of resources.

FirstWatch's customer-oriented team – many of whom have previous public safety and public safety software experience – also offers custom report development and custom alerts, or "triggers," designed to help organizations meet specific situational awareness objectives, as well as performance/operational goals and quality measures.