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Minneapolis 911 and Hennepin EMS Using FirstWatch Real-Time Situational Awareness to Get Police, Ambulance Dispatched More Quickly

Encinitas, Calif. – August 20, 2012 – To ensure that police and emergency medical services in Minneapolis and Hennepin County arrive on scene as quickly as possible, the Minneapolis Emergency Communication Center and the Hennepin EMS Emergency Communication Center have deployed a new system that monitors every 911 call in real-time.

Using the FirstWatch Real-Time Situational Awareness System, communications center, police and EMS staff can monitor every aspect of a 911 call and emergency response as it unfolds, including:

- How long it takes for 911 operators to process calls
- How long dispatchers take to send police or an ambulance
- How long until responders arrive on scene
- How long until that ambulance or police vehicle is back in service and ready to respond to another emergency

"If a response takes too long, command staff can act on the problem immediately," says Chris Kummer, EMS manager for Hennepin Emergency Medical Services, which dispatches ambulances for the city of Minneapolis and other municipalities in Hennepin County. Under their old system, he could run monthly or quarterly response time reports, but that meant delays in how quickly command staff could identify and act on calls that took too long. "The number one benefit of FirstWatch is real-time information, right at my fingertips," Kummer says. "I can monitor the health of things throughout our system at any given moment on my desk top, at home or in the field."

By integrating with the 911 system, FirstWatch can also track and spot emerging threats such as pandemic flu, heat-related injuries or mass casualty crises, enabling public safety to respond quickly and more effectively.

In Minneapolis, 911 calls are answered by the Minneapolis Emergency Communication Center, which also dispatches Minneapolis Police and Fire. "Minneapolis Police plan to use FirstWatch to track crime trends and to keep an eye out for unfolding crises that demand a coordinated, nimble response," says Heather Hunt, Minneapolis's director of emergency communications. "The other feature we are excited about is its performance management capability," Hunt says. "We are looking at our call processing and dispatch times for in-progress, high priority calls."

The FirstWatch deployment was paid for by the city of Minneapolis with a \$240,000 Urban Areas Security Initiative grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"Thanks to the high level of coordination and cooperation between the city of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Emergency Communication Center and Hennepin EMS, we were able to do a single, comprehensive, and therefore cost-effective deployment of FirstWatch that will benefit multiple elements of the system, including 911, police and emergency medical services," says Todd Stout, FirstWatch president and founder.

About FirstWatch:

FirstWatch, an Encinitas-Calif.-based company, began monitoring 911 data in Kansas City, Mo. in 1999. Since then, FirstWatch has grown into a global leader in real-time public safety data analysis, one that's utilized by police, fire, emergency medical services and public health organizations in 35 states and provinces across the United States and Canada.

FirstWatch's Real-Time Situational Awareness System enables public safety organizations to monitor what's happening in their system as events are unfolding, enabling quick action and response. FirstWatch's custom software solution can be used to enhance situational awareness to protect the health and safety of emergency responders; to detect and alert public health and safety organizations 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 come to the job with public safety software or public safety field experience—also offer custom report development and custom alerts, or "triggers," designed to help organizations meet specific situational awareness objectives, as well as performance / operational goals or quality measures.

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