



Firefighter Training Improves Response in High-Risk OB Situations

Medical City Dallas Hospital's high-risk OB transport team knows that high-risk pregnancy situations can happen anywhere, anytime – at home, in a birthing center or on the way to the hospital.

The hospital's Maternal Transport Team has transported patients to Medical City Dallas and surrounding Medical City Healthcare facilities by ambulance, helicopter or fixed wing aircraft since its inception in 2011. More than 300 mothers each year have received care from the transport team's specialized nurses.

"Just about monthly, we are presented with a crisis scenario, and about every two to three months, we have an unexpected situation like a C section, or breech baby or shoulder dystocia," says Cherish Brodbeck, RNC-OB, BSN, LP, supervisor of transport services for the hospital. And, those are situations that local firefighters likely didn't train for in school.

However, thanks to a program the hospital launched two years ago, firefighters across the Dallas Metroplex are now getting that training.

Filling an Education Gap

In 2016, area EMS providers approached the hospital requesting OB-specific education for their annual continuing education. The transport team collaborated with the educator from the hospital's women's services team to develop an hour-long presentation for the event. Since some EMS personnel missed the training, and others wanted more in-depth information, the hospital offered a follow-up session.

"We went to Richardson Fire Department first, where we spent three days conducting four classes per day, so that we were able to educate all of their shifts," says Brodbeck. "We decided to delve into the normal delivery process, simplify it down, work through the equipment they have and the safest ways to go through a normal delivery."

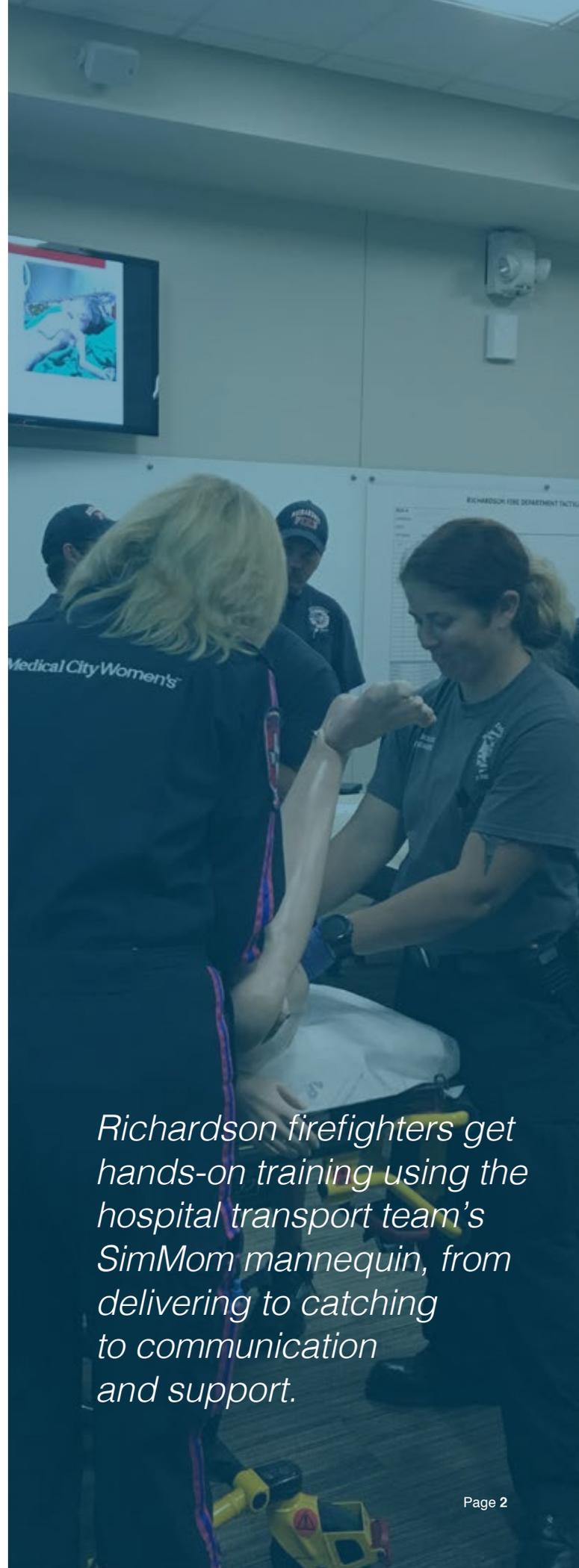
From the strong positive feedback she and her fellow presenters received, it was clear that the hospital was filling a critical education void. "These providers had not received much OB education prior to that. In fact, they get about one day of OB education in the paramedic coursework, and what is covered is limited," she says. "That's the extent of what they normally get in training, so we knew that they had zero information on how to handle complicated deliveries."

Hands-on Training

That spurred the idea to take the training program even further, expanding it to include shoulder dystocia, breech births and prolapsed cords. Using a SimMom mannequin, Brodbeck along with transport team members Carol Wolfe and Jamie Lopez demonstrate how to handle both normal and high-risk birthing situations using evidence-based practices. They then involve the entire class in hands-on learning.

“Everyone puts their hands on the SimMom mannequin. Everybody delivers, everybody catches, everybody participates in a communication role to help guide the team, and in a support role with the mom,” she says. “They are very hands-on learners. At first, they may be shy and timid and overwhelmed. But by the end of class they are very involved and asking tons of questions.”

Since the early sessions at Richardson, word about the program traveled quickly to other fire departments. Already, the hospital has conducted the OB training for hundreds of firefighters and paramedics in Garland, Mesquite, Frisco, The Colony and Plano. “We have so many requests that we already have five more scheduled in 2019,” Brodbeck says.



Richardson firefighters get hands-on training using the hospital transport team's SimMom mannequin, from delivering to catching to communication and support.





“Before this training, these providers had zero information on how to handle complicated deliveries.”

Making a Difference in Maternal Care

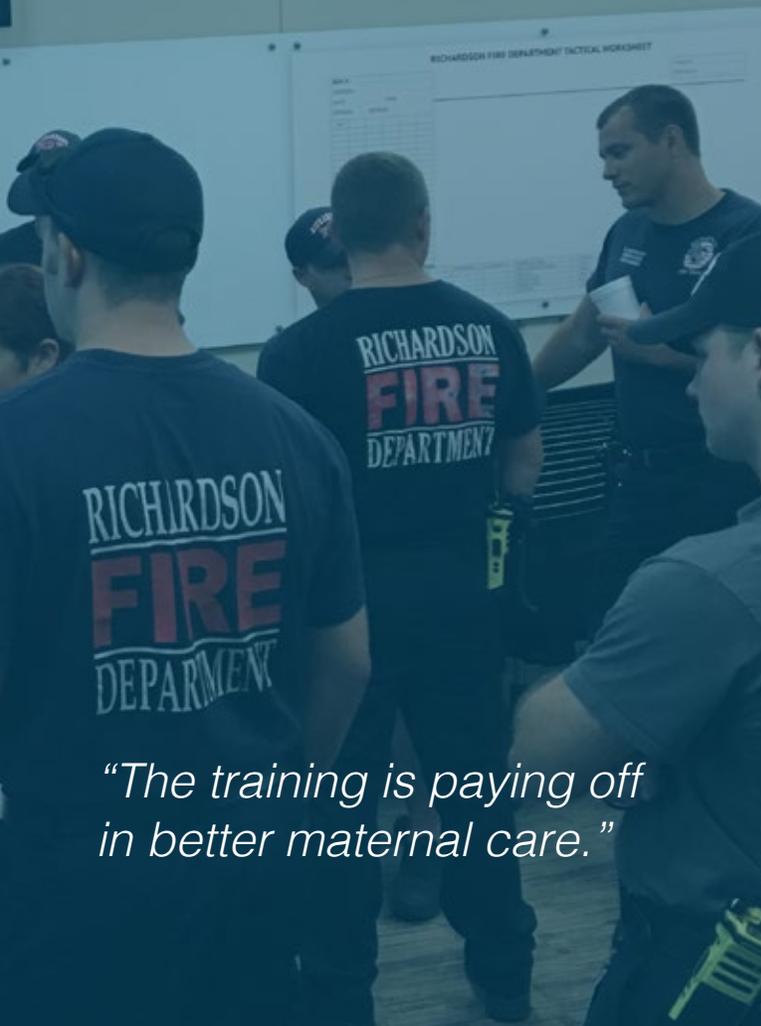
The training sessions have been an avenue for sharing maternal care best practices that many in the audiences had no prior knowledge of. For example, Brodbeck says, EMS is taught to aggressively suction but hospital evidence-based practice is to allow the baby to clear its own airways with suctioning.

One Richardson firefighter shared how oftentimes the paramedics cut themselves while trying to cut the cord, because they are using what’s in their kits – scalpels. “Something as simple as keeping a pair of sterile scissors, like we use in the hospital, in the ambulance would dramatically improve the safety for EMS personnel, as well as the baby and mother,” she notes.

Participants also learn about neonatal resuscitation and how to check a pulse on a neonate. “These are things they know nothing about,” she says.

The training already is paying off in better maternal care. Less than a month after attending a class, Garland firefighters arrived on scene of a call to find a mother and baby in crisis. “The head had delivered before EMS arrived and was stuck,” she says. The firefighters followed the basic maneuvers they were taught, and were able to deliver that child successfully with a great outcome for mother and baby.

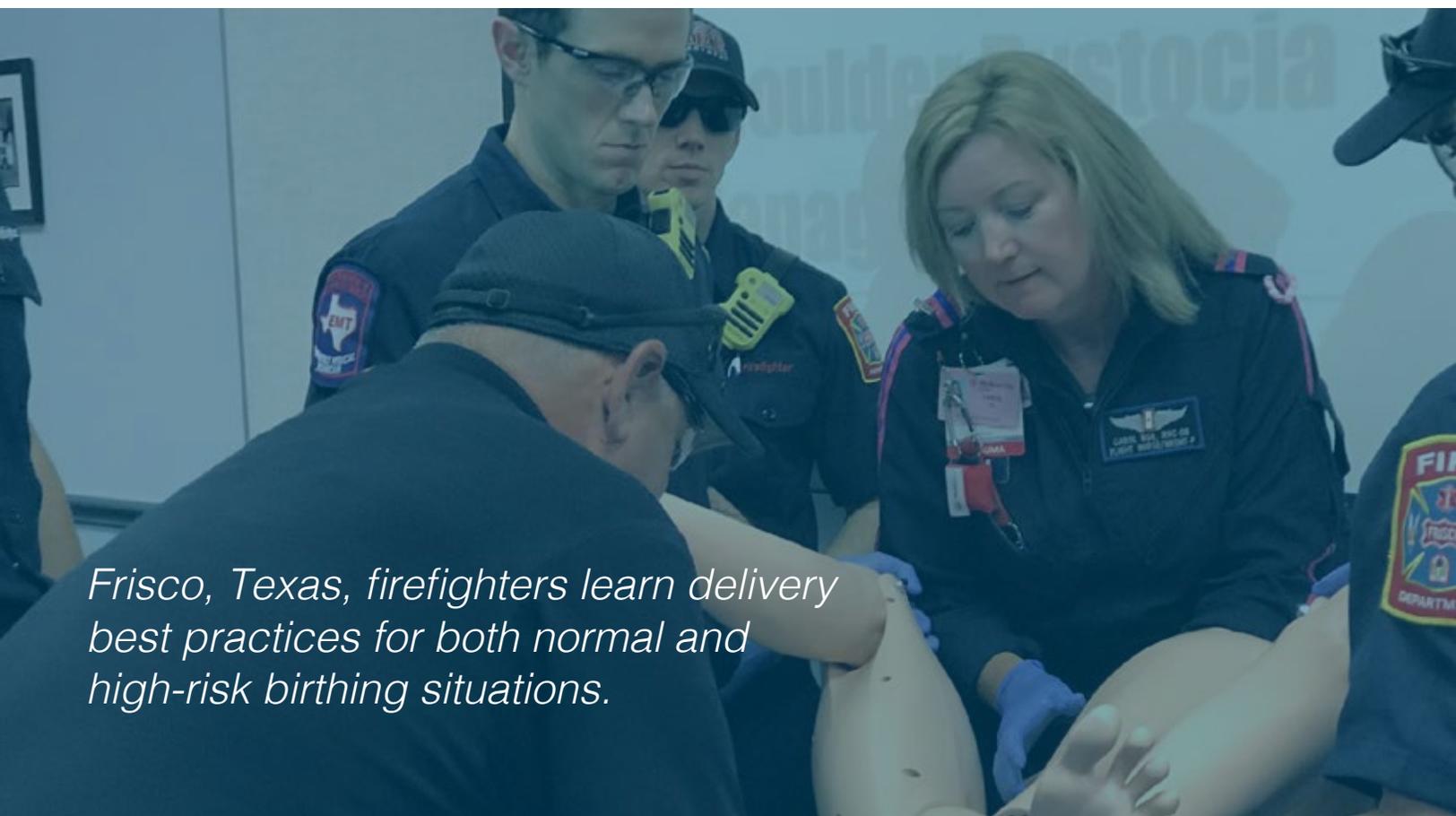
“I’ve had firefighters tell me they wish they had this class when they had their EMS training because there were situations they had encountered that they would have handled differently if they had the education,” Brodbeck notes.



Medical City Dallas Hospital's 60-bed NICU is state-certified as a Level 4 Advanced Intensive Care Unit Neonatal Facility, following its verification survey by Texas Perinatal Services/TETAF.

For more information on the firefighter OB training program, contact Cherish Brodbeck at Cherish.Brodbeck@MedicalCityHealth.com.

"The training is paying off in better maternal care."



Frisco, Texas, firefighters learn delivery best practices for both normal and high-risk birthing situations.