



A New Day. A New Vision for the Valley.

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Merrimack Valley Hospital to host 2nd Annual New England Firefighters Combat Challenge Championship

Merrimack Valley Hospital in conjunction with Haverhill Firefighters Local 1011 will host the 2nd Annual New England Firefighters Combat Challenge Saturday, August 23 and Sunday, August 24 from 10:30am-4:30pm. The event will be held on the hospital campus located at 140 Lincoln Avenue in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Highlights of the event include the Firefighter Combat Challenge, a Kids Challenge, the Adult and Child CPR Challenge sponsored by ZOLL Medical, the Cutters Edge Truck Co. Challenge, and \$4,000 in cash prizes plus merchandise that includes a GPS devise.

"Merrimack Valley Hospital supports the Firefighters Combat Challenge because it promotes exercise and good nutrition, two things necessary for optimum health," said Merrimack Valley Hospital CEO Michael Collins. "We're looking forward to supporting our firefighters and to welcoming the community to this exciting event," added Collins.

Haverhill Firefighter Local 1011 Representative Paul Weinburgh estimates that over 300 firefighters from across the country and Canada will compete, including the current World Champion, male and co-ed World Champion Relay Teams, and Second-Place World Champion in the over 40 division.

Teams that have already signed up are coming from Pennsylvania, Texas, Georgia, Virginia, Kentucky and Canada, as well as teams from local New England states.

New this year is the Cutters Edge Truck Co. Challenge, which tests the skills of firefighters who work on ladder trucks. With power tools firefighters must cut locks on doors, do a forcible entry and cut a hole in a roof, competing against each other and the clock. The Cutters Edge Challenge, a new part of the

overall Firefighters Combat Challenge, has only been done once before in San Diego.

The Firefighters Combat Challenge was created to encourage firefighter fitness while demonstrating the profession's rigors to the public.

Wearing "full bunker gear" and SCOTT Air-Pak breathing apparatus, competitors race head-to-head as they simulate the physical demands of a real-life firefighter. They perform a linked series of five tasks including climbing a five-story tower, hoisting, chopping, dragging hoses and rescuing a life-size, 175-pound "victim." They race against themselves, their opponents and the clock.

This year's New England Event in Haverhill begins Friday when World Champion Brandon Cunningham from Fort Gordon, Georgia and other competitors, put on a course demonstration and training session. There will also be a corporate challenge with five-member teams from the companies who sponsored the event. Major sponsors include Alpha Aesar, Trinity EMS, ZOLL Medical, Merrimack Valley Hospital and Haverhill Firefighters Local 1011.

Throughout the event there will be challenges for spectators including the Kids Firefighter Challenge and the ZOLL Adult and Child CPR Challenge. A dunk tank and a raffle for four fourth-row seats behind the Celtics bench for opening day in November, a package valued at \$500, will also be part of the fun.

This event is free and open to the public. Food and refreshments will be available for purchase. For more information contact the hospital's public relations department by calling 978-420-1157 or 978-420-1168.

About Merrimack Valley Hospital

Merrimack Valley Hospital maintains 108 acute care bed and 17 adult behavioral medicine beds; all are private rooms. The hospital's clinical strengths include a 24-hour emergency department; orthopedic, endoscopic and general surgery; adult behavioral medicine care with a focus on geriatric issues. MVH also provides a wide range of outpatient services, such as surgical day care; x-rays; MRI exams; PET-Scans; 64-Slice CT Scans; digital mammography; bone density testing; dysphasia testing; nuclear medicine; and physical therapy.

The hospital's awards for excellence include the Excellence Through Insight Award, 2008 (HealthStream Research); #1 Nursing Team in New England Award, 2003 (Advance for Nursing Magazine); National Quality Leader Award for Pneumonia Care, 2006 (CareScience Select Practice); High Reliability Cardiac Care Award, 2006 (MassPRO); Top 100 Best Acute Care Hospital Award, 2004 (Total Benchmark Solutions); and Top Ranked Community Value Provider Award, 2007 (Cleverley & Associates). An affiliate of Essent Healthcare, Inc., the hospital serves Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire. More information can be found at www.merrimackvalleyhospital.com.