

## Responding to an Emergency: Lathrop's Safety Net

There are numerous nodes in our response network, including of course your neighbors and your family. While you're in your home or anywhere on the sidewalks or public spaces of either campus, the Lathrop pendants and pull cord system can bring help when you need it. A recent fall after hours at the Meeting House remind us how important and effective this system can be.

Should you find yourself on the floor, with injury or unable to get up, short of breath or experiencing chest pain or other medical emergency:

- pressing your pendant or pulling a cord in any developed area on campus will immediately initiate the response system.
- The system is able to determine where on campus the alarm is located, including public restrooms, curbsides and of course your bathrooms. (Coverage on trails and fields is not dependable. Best to take a friend with you when out for a hike.)
- An automated call is placed to the desk in Easthampton (when the meeting house office is open, the call goes there.) Staff then attempts to contact you by phone to determine if there is fact an emergency. This should happen within 2-3 minutes.
- If they are unable to reach you for any reason, EMS is immediately dispatched. Residents of the INN would expect a staff member to come directly to the site of the alarm.
- Of course, if you are having an obvious medical emergency, you should dial 911 yourself immediately if you are able to do so.

When EMS arrives they will determine if you need just to be put back on your feet, or if medical attention is needed. Lathrop staff will then follow up and notify your emergency contact person that you have been transported to the hospital. This contact person is likely the one you provided when you first moved in (ideally your Health Care Proxy.) It may be a good idea for you to check with the desk to see that your contact is up to date. Though I am updating your File of Life, desk staff do not have access to those summaries. Whether or not EMS is dispatched directly by you or through the system, our informal network works to let others know when residents go to the hospital. Having your contact person alert us in that case is helpful to assist Wellness and security staff to know your status.

The pull cord system is obviously only helpful if it's within your reach. The pendants are no use in the original box in the drawer or across the room hanging on the bedpost. The pendant can be worn around the neck or on a wrist band. False alarms do occur, but let that be a minor inconvenience not a reason to resist using this important safety tool. The system automatically notifies staff when a pendant battery is failing or when the pendants are off campus. And of course, falls and other issues can happen while you are out to lunch, shopping or attending a community event. You might be someone who could benefit from one of the many personal alert systems available, many now with GPS technology. Wellness staff will be happy to assist you in researching such a device.

The goal of course is to stay out of the ditch, but should you find yourself there, it is comforting to know that you needn't stay there long. Help is on the way.