

Jefferson Ambulance partners with Avel eCare

*By Beth Sherard-Hutcheson
times1reporter@gmail.com*

Due to a newly funded program through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and South Dakota general fund dollars, the Jefferson Ambulance received new equipment. Through the grant and funds granted by Governor Kristi Noem, a total \$1.7 million are available to ambulance services across the state. On April 26, the Jefferson Ambulance will receive Telemedicine in Motion through Avel eCare.

Avel eCare is a telemedicine provider, like a virtual health care center based out of Sioux Falls. This program is made up of a team of expert physicians, nurses and clinicians and deliver services to support local care teams and caregivers.

The Telemedicine in Motion initiative provides 24/7 access to a team board-certified emergency physicians and experienced nurses to render emergency care and peer-to-peer support for EMS agencies in the State of South Dakota.

The Jefferson Ambulance will have their vehicle equipped with a cabin-mounted telehealth tablet, microphones, speakers, antennas and cellular boosters to support strong connectivity in the field.

Despite the nature of the call, this service is meant to help EMS professionals when responding to a call. Avel's emergency medicine experts can help with a variety of actions and procedures ranging from airway management and trauma care and medical decisions as needed. Avel can also contact the receiving hospital to alert them to incoming patients.

"This is truly an exciting addition to our service," Jefferson Ambulance Director Michael Oberg said. "There's been a lot of behind the scenes work to ensure we meet our go live date of April 26. We're fortunate to live in a community that has people willing to volunteer and allows a small town like Jefferson to have its own Ambulance Service. Being a rural community and having Interstate 29 run through our service area, we see a variety of calls such as medical emergencies, agricultural accidents and motor vehicle accidents. Having another resource available is going to be a great addition to the many people that volunteer their time to serve Jefferson and the surrounding area."

Utilizing this service will also inform the EMS crew whether a paramedic is needed during transport.

Avel's goal as the service provider is to, given the geographic and connectivity challenges, deliver the highest quality care possible while ensuring a fantastic user experience. It is also to ensure that EMS crews are no longer alone.

The crew will have to undergo some training with the program, but it is estimated to take one to three hours.