

## CHATTAHOOCHEE TECHNICAL COLLEGE PARAMEDICINE TRANSCRIPT

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Grace Thompson: You learn so much, not only about emergency medicine and how to take care of a patient, but how to be a good person.

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Beau Witcher: And so at the end of the day, we do see things that the normal person wouldn't see, but it's one of those few professions where we could actually do something about it.

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Steven Fearon: If you graduate our program, I know exactly what kind of clinician you are because we mold you into good professionals, talented individuals.

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Narrator: 98 seven Chatt Tech. Where 98.7% of our students earn a career. On this episode, we'll be discussing the paramedicine EMT and AEMT programs. We'll be hearing from instructors, a graduate, a current student, and an employer for Metro Ambulance that partners with Chattahoochee Tech. So let's get started and meet our first instructor.

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Ryan Dehnert: My name is Ryan Dehnert, and I serve as the program director for the EMS programs at Chattahoochee Technical College. That includes EMT, advanced EMT, and paramedic. And then I also serve as the lead paramedic instructor for our programs.

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Narrator: Ryan, can you talk about being in emergency medical services?

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Ryan Dehnert: Most of the time when people think EMS, emergency medical services, they do oftentimes think ambulance. And I would say is the bulk of where most students end up working. If a person gets their EMT license. Again, readily available jobs out there on ambulances all over the state and not just in our state, but all over the nation, which is nice. And so that's one of the perks about getting this sort of a license level, is that wherever a person decides to work, whether they work in a

rural setting or an urban setting, whether they're in Georgia or they're in Kentucky or Oregon, whatever the case might be, this is the sort of license that's going to give them job opportunities wherever they go. That being said, ambulances are all over the nation, but there are other places that people work as well. Fire departments run roughly about 15% of a fire department's call on average is fire calls. The other 85% are usually either medical or trauma and nature. And so fire departments are running a lot of injuries and illness calls. And so it makes sense for fire departments to be utilizing EMS licensed personnel. And so many fire departments require that of the personnel that they be at least EMTs, advanced EMTs, or even paramedics. And so having this license will open up opportunities for working with fire departments, also hospitals, sometimes EMTs, advanced EMTs may be in like a tech sort of setting, maybe like a patient care tech or an E.R. tech. If a person is a paramedic, then there are opportunities to work. For instance, in like an E.R., working alongside RNs and providing patient care. More and more hospitals are recruiting paramedics to work in that capacity. With some of the nursing shortages that have been seen in different hospitals as well. In addition to that, if a person has a paramedic license, there are a number of critical care opportunities out there. So things like rotary wing transport, working on a helicopter. I did that for several years before taking the position here at the college. I worked as a flight paramedic alongside with a flight nurse, and so that's one opportunity. Also, there are fixed wing opportunities. There's several companies in the area. When I say fixed wing, talking about airplanes, that will take patients from state to state or even from one country to another, and those are going to be staffed usually by a paramedic, a nurse, possibly a physician. So again, having that license level opens up some pretty neat opportunities in that capacity as well. And then really anywhere where it could be hard to get, let's just say an ambulance to quickly. So if you think about a place like Six Flags, a number of our students have gone and they've worked part time at like Six Flags or Whitewater providing EMS care there. You know, I met a guy one time who worked on an oil rig and that was where he worked. He worked there for three weeks at a time, and then he would be off for three weeks. And so really, anywhere again, where it can be hard to get medical care factories, you'll see EMS providers working there and then also teaching. If a person, you know decides to move down that pathway, there's lots of opportunity for education as well, which is where obviously I have landed with my profession.

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Beau Witcher: Thanks, Ryan. My name is Beau Witcher. I'm a paramedic and a firefighter with Cherokee County Fire. Um, I'm an alumni and an employee with Chattahoochee Tech. I'm adjunct part time paramedic and EMT instructor with Chattahoochee Tech, and that's me.

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Narrator: Let's talk about how long the EMT and EMT programs are and what's the difference between them.

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Beau Witcher: So I've been through both Chattahoochee EMT program, which is their EMT to advance EMT, which is a year long. And then I did the paramedic program, which is a year and a half long, and that gave me all my initial training for EMS to get started in my career and start working for Bartow County as a paramedic, working for their EMS service, and then moving over to Cherokee County for their fire department as a paramedic and firefighter.

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Narrator: What's it like being in your line of work?

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Beau Witcher: EMS is I don't want to say it's a thankless profession because we we get a lot of love from the community, but it's one of the professions that is very rewarding. We see people and in sometimes the worst days of their lives in the worst ways possible. But we get the training and the know how to take care of them, to be there, to hold their hand, to save their life, to give them the necessary treatments that they need. And so at the end of the day, we do see things that the normal person wouldn't see, but it's one of those few professions where we could actually do something about it. It's very rewarding.

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Narrator: That's interesting. Now let's meet our third instructor.

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Steven Fearon: My name is Steven Fearon. I'm the EMT AEMT instructor at Chattahoochee Tech. I grew up in Flint, Michigan, right in the center. Worked there for my first 3 or 4 years or so as an EMT paramedic, and finished the rest of my career out as a paramedic on an ambulance for a grand total of around 15 years here. And I'm completing now my second year of teaching at Chattahoochee Tech.

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Narrator: Let's talk about class size and what are they all about?

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Steven Fearon: EMS is broken down into three licensure for pre-hospital care EMT, advanced EMT, and then paramedic. And I teach the first of those two licensure. As far as class size we have a seating size of about 30. I love teaching, I always tell them fill the class up well, I'll bring chairs and line them up in the hallway if we have to. And we've yet to have to essentially turn many people away. Usually it's only 1 or

2. We'll go through the EMT program. Licensure is about two semesters. And then a EMT, much like a advanced hat on top of the EMT, is another semester after that.

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Narrator: So EMT is the first level and AEMT is next level. What's the difference?

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Steven Fearon: That's correct. Basically you say, hey, I'm going to do medical stuff, I want to get on an ambulance. I say, well, you know, we can start you in an hour program. And inside of we have two programs. One that's kind of an expedited. So I can say within one side of 4 or 6 months, depending on your choice, we can put you in people's homes, taking care of them, transporting them to the hospital. You say, great, I want more. I want more responsibility. I want access to medications. I want more interventions. I say, okay, will you make 1 or 2 choices? You can go on to an advanced EMT program, which allows you more access and will only take you several months to complete. You'll get more money from the companies you work for, opens more doors, or you can start a 12 to 16 month program, which is paramedicine, which is going to give you substantially more access to interventions. So to sum that up, you become an EMT to get on an ambulance and then you make a choice. Do you want to be an advanced EMT or do you want to move on to paramedicine. And that choice is made based often on life goals. Because EMS is a very launching pad career. You can launch into fire police. There are bridge programs to turn your degree into a nursing degree without having to retake sciences and the like, but what you're really trying to decide is, do I want the responsibility? Right? Because as an AEMT, you are largely an orphan. If you're not working EMT, EMT truck, you're working with a paramedic, and the paramedic is making a very strong leadership decisions and is taking a substantial amount of responsibility on patient care and the like.

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Narrator: Aaaah. Gotcha. What's a typical day in the classroom look like?

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Steven Fearon: In our program? You know, we break it down most days into a half and half experience where we're lecturing from 830 to noon. You go to lunch, come back, and then we finish out the day until five, doing simulated lab experiences where we're really practicing stuff, and there is a lot of didactic portions to it. Put very simply, even if you're very charming, if you don't know the numbers, if you don't know normal blood pressures, if you don't know doses, you know you're going to really struggle and potentially hurt people. So the both of those aspects, it's an interesting dynamic where you need a person who can both communicate and be a leader, as well as retain a lot of information.

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Narrator: Now that we've met our instructors and learned about the programs, let's talk with the graduate and a current student.

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Kianna Fournier: I'm Kianna Fournier. I graduated Chatt Tech's AEMT program back in May of this past 2023 year currently working for Cherokee Fire Department.

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Narrator: How was your experience in the EMT program?

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Kianna Fournier: I really enjoyed going through Chatt Tech's program. It really aids your learning and your studying and everything. Just like you get 50% you're doing lecture and the other 50% you're doing lab time. So you really get a bunch of hands on as well as book stuff. You know, the teachers are great. The adjuncts that are down there really like just set up the entire experience of, like, you're in a real life scenario working on an actual patient. We have different lab rooms that just help set mock scenarios up that really you wouldn't get doing it out like on an online program or anything like that. So you really get that stress inhibitor and everything and learn how to deal with that.

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Narrator: What's your story about enrolling in the program?

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Kianna Fournier: I looked at other programs and none of them really seemed very none of them really jumped out at me. I knew several people that went through Chatt Tech's AEMT program, and they all said great, amazing things about it. I'm really glad that I did choose this route. You know, one of the things when I was looking was like, what can I go through the quickest time to get me the same outcome? And the more I looked into it and did my own research on like EMS and stuff like that, I was like, well, maybe it's not the best thing to just rush in and go through a program that. You say three months because you just don't get that experience of that hands on portion as well as the book time portion. You know, you also the students that you're going through with it, like you're going through it together and you really bond with, you know, the people around you because you're all going through the same thing and like going through that same experience and whatnot, and you're able to help each

other and open up new doors of like seeing things, different ways and just you're constantly learning every day. You're like, you're a sponge and just soaking all the information in. So it's really great.

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Narrator: And what are your thoughts about the instructors?

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Kianna Fournier: I think they're awesome. Oh, you have Ryan Dehnert down there and King and Fearon and they all really they're always a click of a button on your phone. You know, if you need anything, if you need help, you know, if you need help studying, if you need help with your clinicals, anything of the sort, they're always there. They really get to know you and your the amount of time you're there, you're spending and everything. So it's really awesome. And you know, there's a level of compassion and just understanding and they really invest in you as much as you invest in the program.

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Narrator: Thanks, Kianna. And now let's meet a current student.

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Grace Thompson: I am, uh, Grace Thompson. I'm in the Chattahoochee Tech EMT program.

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Narrator: Grace, what sparked your interest in the program?

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Grace Thompson: I enrolled so that I could become an EMT. I had seen lots of EMTs in action, and I thought that was such a wonderful job. And I did some research and found Chattahoochee Tech. And their program is wonderful. And here I am.

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Narrator: Can you talk about your experience in the classroom?

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Grace Thompson: It was very intense, but it was all worth it. We have class two days a week all day, and then we have clinicals along with that. But it is such an enjoyable class that I've never I've never not enjoyed a moment of it.

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Narrator: What would you say to someone contemplating enrolling?

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Grace Thompson: I would just say it's a lot of a lot of hard work, but it is so worth it. The people that you get to interact with are amazing. You learn so much, not only about emergency medicine and how to take care of a patient, but how to be a good person, how to connect with people, how to be a good leader and a good follower, how to just help people in the worst days. Even if emergency medicine isn't your favorite thing, you will come to love the profession just through interacting with people.

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Narrator: Of course, when students graduate, they need a job. Let's talk with an employer that partners with Chattahoochee Tech.

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Lisa Birkinbine: My name is Lisa Birkinbine . I'm the manager of clinical and educational services at Metro Atlanta Ambulance Service, have been on Chattahoochee Tech's EMS advisory board for many years, but I've served as the employer representative, and I also get to help schedule the student clinicals. So they ride with us while they're in school and I do all that scheduling.

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Narrator: Can you tell us more about Metro Ambulance Service?

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Lisa Birkinbine: So Metro Atlanta is a large For-Profit private ambulance service that services Cobb County, Bartow County, and Paulding County for 911 as long as several of the Metro Atlanta area hospitals for inter facility service. We employ close to 700 licensed EMS folks and provide both emergency and non-emergency transport. We employ EMTs at all different levels, so we'll use you from the EMT level up to the paramedic level. We have spots for everybody.

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Narrator: What do you think about hiring Chatt Tech graduates?

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Lisa Birkinbine: Um, we have found that over the years they have always been well prepared, well educated, great entry level providers. It's very rare that I'll have someone who went to Chattahoochee Tech that is not ready to hit the ground running, both when they come for rides and when they come on as new employees. So I do a lot of the onboarding here. And so Chattahoochee Tech students are usually some of my favorites because they're familiar with the way that we run. They're also familiar with the way that we document. And it makes the transition from school to employee a really easy one.

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Narrator: You said you have close to 700 employees. Out of curiosity, how many have come from Chatt Tech?

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Lisa Birkinbine: We've had a fair amount of Chattahoochee Tech graduates come to us. But I do know that at times we've had almost full orientation classes of 12 or 15 people that are all from Chattahoochee Tech that we've brought on at the same time, like right after a licensing period. And that's really exciting to see, because then they all know each other and they all get to start the job together.

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Narrator: Instructor Fearon, I want to give you the last words.

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Steven Fearon: I remember interviewing here for the position of instructor at Chatt Tech, and just being blown away by the amount of rooms and facilities, the ambulance simulator, the dummies that can simulate breathing and cyanosis of the lips, the different lung conditions. They can simulate blood pressure. I was absolutely blown away by the capability of the lab space, and then blown away by the consideration of the instructors. When you come through Chatt ech, you are absolutely emmersed in the field, when HR departments from various ambulance services call me, they will ask, hey, this person went to Chatt Tech, what do you think about them? You know, if you graduate our program, I know exactly what kind of clinician you are because we mold you into good professionals, talented individuals. And you were just given so much exposure here.



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Narrator: Chatt Tech. The College of Real World Training and how our communities are stronger and better, thanks to the thousands of Chatt Tech graduates in our local workforce. For more information about the paramedicine EMT program at Chattahoochee Tech, visit [Chattahoochee Tech EDU](http://ChattahoocheeTech.edu). Thanks for listening to 98 seven Chatt Tech, where 98.7% of our students earn a career.