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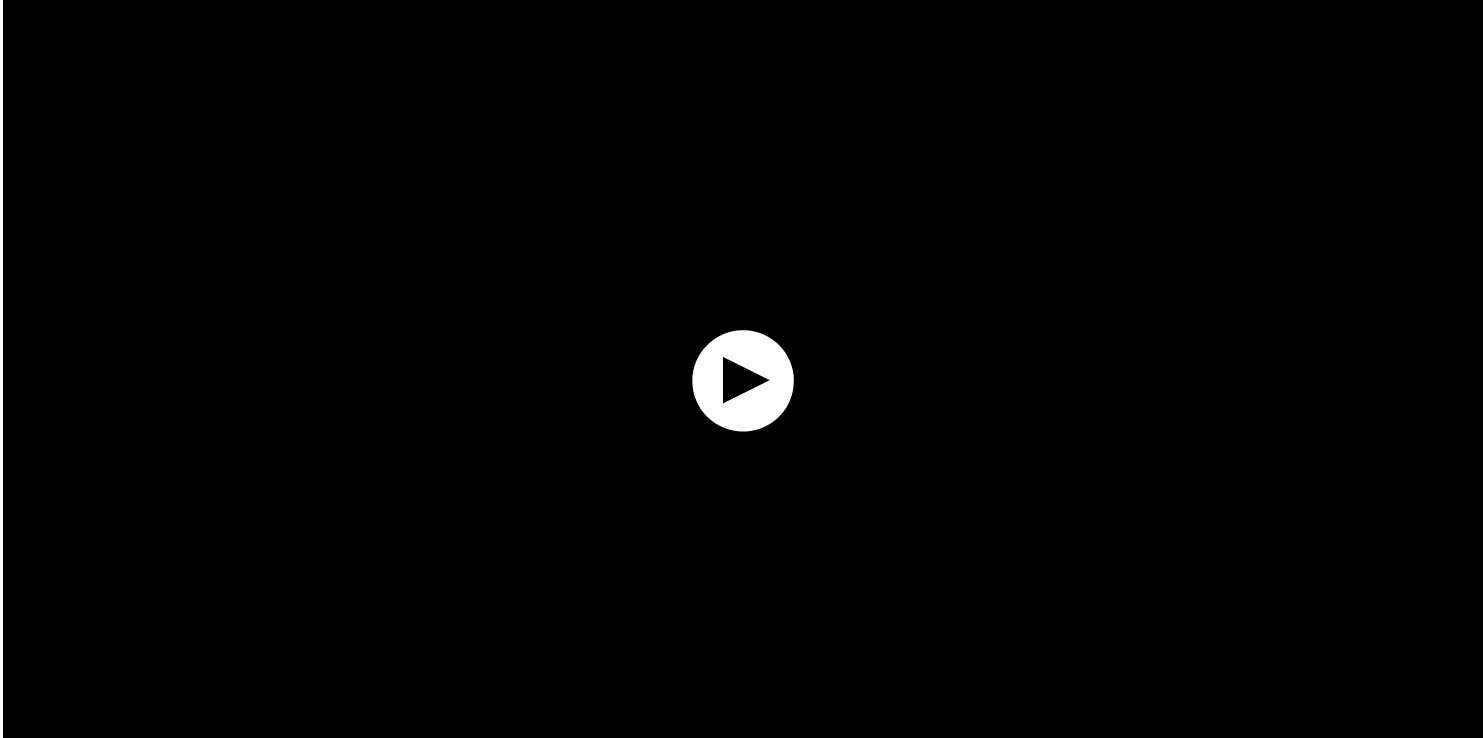
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Nurse practitioners may respond to 911 calls in Tuscaloosa

by Stoney Sharp
Tuesday, July 11th 2017



Stoney Sharp reports.

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TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — The Tuscaloosa City Council is expected to approve a partnership with The University of Alabama to create a Paramedicine Program in the city.

Nurse practitioners, physician assistants and mental health workers would respond to 911 calls in Tuscaloosa.

The goal is to prevent costly ambulance rides and visits to the emergency room by treating patients with non-life-threatening conditions in their homes.

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"The pilot program will allow us, on our emergency calls to people who have conditions such as flu-like symptoms or nosebleeds, to be able to have a nurse practitioner ride along with us or a physicians assistant. They would then treat those patients in the home," said Tuscaloosa Fire and Rescue Service Chief Alan Martin.

The university plans to provide the advanced medical team and a \$500,000 state medicaid grant would kick start the program.

"We will provide a healthcare team consisting of two advanced practitioners, either nurse practitioners or physician assistants, and two mental health workers," said Dr. Richard Friend with UA's Department of Family, Internal and Rural Medicine. "We will respond to calls that aren't life-threatening. We will try to intervene and provide appropriate care in whatever setting that is. That may be a small laceration, that may be a contusion, back pain, headache or elevated blood pressure."

If the city council approves the deal, Tuscaloosa's Paramedicine Program will begin October 1.

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