

## **Trailblazers: Highlighting The Impact of Women in Medicine and Healthcare**

### **Background:**

Exposure to the history of healthcare and key contributors is limited in our current medical curriculum. Early medical education incorporates patient narratives and social contexts, but further exploration of the evolution of our healthcare system is only found in specific trails like the Bioethics and Humanities trail. This project explored the historical development of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the United States through the experiences of Beverly Walker, RN, Inaugural Program Director of the Memphis, Tennessee, EMS Paramedic program, and evaluated the educational impact of this narrative approach.

### **Methods:**

Historical research on the origins and evolution of EMS was conducted using PubMed and the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. Interviews were conducted with Beverly Walker from June 2025 until February 2026 and were supplemented by personal photographs and articles. Her narrative was synthesized into an educational PowerPoint presentation and a written article. The PowerPoint presentation was presented to the Bioethics and Humanities cohort and qualitative feedback was collected via required post-presentation surveys.

### **Results:**

The narrative of Beverly Walker, RN, highlighted the development of the Memphis EMS paramedic program in parallel with the national development of program access and policy. Her experiences give voice to the role of women in early EMS leadership and structural challenges surrounding the establishment of paramedic training programs in the U.S. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive, emphasizing the humanizing perspective of Beverly's story and its value in understanding the historical foundations of the field of EMS.

### **Conclusion:**

Incorporating individual historical narratives into health and society curriculum enhances learner understanding and appreciation of healthcare systems. This project supports the inclusion of underrepresented voices in medical history as a meaningful component of Health Humanities curricula.