Israel's Ministry of Health reaffirms MDA as the country's national emergency medicine dispatch service.
Enforcing its 2014 ruling, the Ministry of Health confirmed Magen David Adom as Israel’s only official emergency medical response dispatcher. All first responders in Israel, regardless of affiliation, must register with Magen David Adom, which will have the sole responsibility of dispatching the closest first responders to emergency scenes. This is one of many roles MDA serves as Israel’s national EMS organization.

The implementation of the ruling, which took effect January 7, means that all first responders, including those from United Hatzalah, the only organization not previously dispatched by MDA, are now dispatched by MDA. As a result, about 2,000 United Hatzalah first responders have joined the more than 6,500 first responders from Magen David Adom — including the 16 other local Hatzalah organizations affiliated with MDA — called to the scenes of medical emergencies.

This is in addition to MDA’s 25,000 EMTs — including 350 paramedics, the most highly trained EMTs — who respond to medical emergencies, stabilize patients, and transport them to hospitals via one of MDA’s 1,100 ambulances and Mobile Intensive Care Units.

In the aftermath of two of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history within their state’s borders, Florida first responders turned to Magen David Adom for its expertise in dealing with another kind of potential mass-casualty incident — one involving a terrorist attack.

First responders, including county and municipal EMTs and law-enforcement officials from Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Monroe counties, attended seminars the week of January 14 conducted by Guy Caspi, head of mass-casualty training for MDA.

“Some of the procedures we do in Israel are common sense,” Caspi said. “But much of it are things we learned from having to rethink some of the protocols when we realized they didn’t work for us anymore — not under the circumstances we were facing. And we got to continually refine them under real-life scenarios. We became good at responding to terrorist attacks because, unfortunately, we’ve had a lot of practice.”

As a result of its experience responding to terrorist events, Magen David Adom has conducted seminars and training drills with first responders around the world, including in Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, India, the Philippines, and Australia.
MDA Stories from Israel

**MDA’s stroke protocols dramatically reduce time to provide victims with crucial hospital treatment.**

Magen David Adom has established protocols to provide waiting doctors with comprehensive patient data before ambulances arrive to hospitals, eliminating the need for some diagnostic tests and enabling physicians to begin lifesaving interventions immediately.

In a trial conducted by MDA and Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, the average time in which stroke patients begin receiving lifesaving hospital interventional treatment was reduced from 54 minutes to just 24 minutes, cutting the time by more than half. As a result of this dramatic finding, MDA introduced the protocol to all Israeli hospitals.

MDA has also shared these protocols and technology with interested EMS organizations around the world.

“This protocol – and the technology we’re using – is already saving lives in Israel,” said Dr. Refael Strugo, chief medical officer for Magen David Adom in Israel. “If it can save lives somewhere else in the world too, so much the better.”

**MDA’s First 7 Minutes: Helping communities save lives.**

“First 7 Minutes” is a unique seminar designed by Magen David Adom to provide basic lifesaving training to communities around the world during a multi-casualty incident.

The powerful seminar features MDA’s most experienced paramedics and instructors, who have personal experience with such incidents. Participants learn how to properly administer CPR, stop bleeding, and understand the difference between urgent and non-urgent wounds, as well as how to respond within the chaos of the scene until emergency responders arrive.

After the recent tragedy at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, “First 7 Minutes” can empower communities with basic skills and knowledge to band together and save lives after a terror attack. MDA has presented this seminar in Great Britain, Greece, Estonia, Canada, Switzerland, and Eastern Europe, just to name a few countries.

To bring MDA’s “First 7 Minutes” seminar to your synagogue or community, contact Catherine Reed at 212.757.1627 or creed@afmda.org.

**Ofra Terrorist Attack: MDA saves husband and wife.**

In late December, a terrorist shot seven Israelis in a drive-by attack just outside Ofra. EMTs and paramedics at Magen David Adom’s Ofra Emergency Medical Station, one of 18 stations MDA operates in Judea and Samaria, heard the gunshots and rushed to the scene before an emergency call was even placed. They arrived in less than a minute to find Shira and her husband, Amichai, lying on the pavement with gunshot wounds.

Shira, the more critically wounded and 30 weeks pregnant, was rapidly losing blood. In an attempt to save the baby, doctors performed an emergency C-section.

Tragically, the baby died days later from complications related to premature birth and hypoxia resulting from Shira’s initial blood loss. Shira, however, made a full recovery.

“The saving of her life is thanks solely to the action of the paramedics,” said Dr. Alon Schwartz, the surgeon who operated on Shira at Shaare Zedek Medical Center. “Without their quick response and pressure applied to the bleeding area, she would not have survived.”

Israel’s national blood bank is set to allow nursing mothers to donate surplus milk for babies who need it.

Joining institutions around the world, Magen David Adom will test and analyze the milk before pasteurizing and storing it. It’s being set up in conjunction with Israel’s Ministry of Health that advocates the creation of Israel Milk Bank, a nonprofit that’s working to create a human milk bank in Israel.

“This collaboration brings together the knowledge of three different organizations for one critical goal: to increase the chances of survival and health of premature babies and newborns in Israel,” said MDA Blood Services Director Professor Eilat Shinar, who oversees MDA’s national blood bank and its services.
MDA Stories from Israel

First Haredi female judge in US visits Magen David Adom.

Judge Rachel “Ruchie” Freier, the first Haredi female judge in the US, visited Magen David Adom in December. “I saw not only what Magen David Adom does for the residents and especially the women who want to join, but actually I saw you in action,” said Judge Freier.

“I thank MDA’s women for the inspiration I received during my visit to the organization that I will pack with me in a suitcase and take back to New York.”

Judge Freier visited MDA’s Bloomberg Station in Jerusalem, where she met Orthodox women who volunteer in the organization and toured the operational dispatch center at the station. She also rode in the MDA electric car, driven by Chaya Vitkes, the first Haredi MDA first responder, who saves lives in this special electric car, the first to receive rabbinic approval.

Marcus National Blood Services Center Construction Update

Construction has started on Israel’s new blood services center.

We are thrilled to announce that after a thorough review process, a main contractor, Afcon-Minrav, was selected in late November and has already started construction on the Marcus National Blood Services Center, the most important construction project in Israel today.

Afcon-Minrav is a highly respected company that will apply its expertise and experience to building the world’s first shielded, underground blood services center in the world.

The state-of-the-art Marcus National Blood Services Center will start processing, storing, and distributing Israel’s lifeblood by late 2020.

The history of MDA’s Medicycle

1930
Motorcycles and bicycles are introduced to help transport the injured.

1948
When the British leave Palestine, they leave behind most of their vehicles, including motorcycles, which MDA puts into service.

1970s
In the 1970s, motorcycles are increasingly used to reach patients in Israel’s cities and begin lifesaving treatment.

1980s
MDA has dozens of motorcycles, including this one in Jerusalem.

2005
MDA forms First Responder Medicycle Unit and formally integrates motorcycles into its lifesaving fleet.

2009
Magen David Adom begins using Italian-made Piaggio 250cc three-wheeled scooters.

2012
MDA puts its 100th “Medicycle” into service.

2013
MDA unveils the first ALS Medicycle, a faster 500cc model with a larger storage unit designed to bring additional equipment to emergency scenes.

2016
Through heavily clogged rush-hour traffic in Tel Aviv, MDA medics on Medicycles make a critical difference when a terrorist stabs 10 people, including an American tourist.

2018
MDA inaugurates 500th Medicycle and introduces a two-wheeled 650cc Suzuki V-Strom as part of the First Responder Fleet. MDA has 600 Medicycles by year’s end.

2019
MDA unveils thousands of Medicycles to its First Responder Fleet for immediate deployment.

2020
MDA adds the Marcus National Blood Services Center as part of its lifesaving fleet.
Ambulance Donations Update

Lifesaving vehicles sent to Israel in 2018.
Magen David Adom receives no operating budget from the Israeli government, so vehicle donations from Americans are vital to its lifesaving efforts.

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130 VEHICLES FUNDED IN 2018

Send 150 Vehicles to Israel
Help Us Make a Bigger Impact in 2019!

The Daniella Moffson Foundation

From a young age, Daniella Moffson’s life was guided by the desire to help others. Whether it was in the pediatric units of Weill Cornell Medical Center or Mt. Sinai Hospital, in South African AIDS clinics, or through the Friendship Circle, Daniella devoted each of her days to helping the people around her. Daniella spent her year after high school in Jerusalem working with some of Israel’s most needy children. That summer, she volunteered with Magen David Adom, where she was trained as an ambulance medic. After her gap year, Daniella attended Barnard College and worked tirelessly toward achieving her goal of enrolling in medical school and becoming a pediatric oncologist.

On January 13, 2016, while volunteering with the Columbia University Chapter of Global Brigades, Daniella was killed in a tragic bus accident in Honduras. Her friends and family established the Daniella Moffson Foundation to continue Daniella’s legacy and accomplish the good she would have used her life to achieve. Her foundation chose MDA this year to receive an ambulance to honor her memory, because Magen David Adom embodied her guiding principles.

Donor Spotlights

Donna Calcaterra

Through the 613 Foundation, Donna Calcaterra and her daughter, Jenna, have donated 13 vehicles – including a specially constructed bloodmobile – to Magen David Adom. The first, an ambulance dedicated to the memory of Donna’s parents and uncle, was sent off following a ceremony at the Bergen YMCC in Washington Township in 2009. “I’ve wanted to donate an ambulance since my first visit to Israel in 1970,” Donna told The Jewish Standard. “I saw all the MDA ambulances dedicated to people, and I thought if I were ever rich enough, it was something I’d like to do. I didn’t think I’d ever have the money, because I was supposed to be a famous artist. But instead, I wound up on Wall Street as a commodities broker. The day my stock IPO’d, my first call was to Gary Perl.”

"The day my stock IPO’d, my first call was to Gary Perl."

And Donna’s generosity and commitment to Israel was demonstrated again this November, when she announced at the New York Gala a $3 million gift for the Marcus National Blood Services Center, the world’s first underground, shielded blood bank and processing center, under construction now in Israel.

"The day my stock IPO’d, my first call was to Gary Perl."
Hanna Legator

“In fifth grade, I knew that I wanted to be a doctor, and the summer I spent volunteering with MDA only strengthened that resolve. I was in Israel at a time when the country was under the barrage of missiles from Gaza. I remember seeing injured soldiers arriving to the hospital to which we had just transported a patient. Their faces left a lasting impression on me. I was so grateful to be there, working with MDA at a time when volunteers were greatly needed. The entire experience gave me a deeper appreciation of what life is like in Israel and the strength and resilience of our people.”

Manuela Rosero

“The reason I chose to volunteer for Magen David Adom was because I wanted to combine my natural interest in the medical field with my love for the land of Israel. My favorite experience was when we went to an Arab village to help a man with back pain, and I got to see how everyone helped each other, no matter their race, beliefs, or differences. MDA was a great experience and helped me to prepare to become a physician’s assistant.”

Daniel Farahi

“Israel and Zionism are the foundation of my identity. That’s thanks to my grandfather, who persevered through anti-Semitism in his native Iran, and, in turn, developed an enduring love for the only Jewish state. Through MDA, I learned what it was like to be a family’s last hope, providing 45 minutes of straight chest compressions in an effort to revive their patriarch. I worked alongside Arab Israelis, treating Jews, Arabs, and African refugees on my 24th birthday. I carried a 93-year-old Holocaust survivor down five flights of stairs, only to see the numbers on her arm as I took her blood pressure. Thanks to these experiences, my perspective on life broadened unequivocally.”

If you’re between the ages of 18 and 30, you can serve alongside MDA EMTs as a participant in the Overseas Volunteer Program. For more, visit www.mdavolunteers.org.
Although her own life wasn’t always easy, Miami woman made sure her legacy would save someone else’s.

It would be an understatement to say that life was sometimes challenging for Reska Lieberman Gwozdzinska. As a young girl in Leżajsk in Southeast Poland, she hid with a Catholic family to avoid arrest and possible execution by the Nazis.

Surviving the war and the Holocaust, she eventually married the son of the family that had hidden her and had one daughter, Margie. Her husband predeceased her, and nine years ago, she was struck by a car while crossing the street, so severely injured in the accident that her leg had to be amputated. But with the resilience she had developed surviving World War II, she recovered, only to see her beloved daughter predecease her last year after a battle with cancer.

Growing older, Reska wanted to leave a lasting legacy, one that would play a role in saving the lives of others. As a result, she and her extended family sponsored a Life Support Ambulance for Magen David Adom in Margie’s memory.

“She wanted nothing more than to attend the dedication for that ambulance,” says her cousin Lorne Lieberman of Montreal. The ambulance was dedicated in Miami on December 2, with Reska surrounded by family and loved ones. She passed away little more than a week later. “Even as she faced her own death,” Lorne said, “her last wishes were mitzvahs.”

Chaired by Andrea Sussman and Dianne Bernstein, the first-ever Palm Beach card party at Mirasol Country Club welcomed more than 250 women with open arms and put on a fabulous event benefiting Magen David Adom, featuring Medevac paramedic, Chen Vermus.
How Malka will save lives for many years to come.

Malka Von Weber’s support for Magen David Adom goes far beyond financial support. Whenever she was in Israel during the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s, Malka was an overseas volunteer on ambulances for MDA.

“I loved the experience of working with MDA and helping those in need of medical attention,” says Malka. Now living in Florida, Ms. Von Weber continues her commitment to MDA with Charitable Gift Annuities and by including AFMDA in her estate plan.

A charitable gift annuity is a wonderful way to secure a secure high fixed-rate life income for yourself now and provide for the future of the people of Israel through Magen David Adom.

“Knowing that my funds will continue to support MDA and the people of Israel is very important to me.”

Please contact Jeff Lipkin, legacy giving advisor, at 866.632.2763 or legacy-giving@afmda.org.

Secure your future and the future of Israel with one gift and a little planning!

If you’re 65 or older, you can receive income for life as well as a tax deduction this year through a Charitable Gift Annuity from American Friends of Magen David Adom.

And, best of all, while you’re providing for your future, you’ll be leaving a lasting legacy, ensuring emergency medical care and the blood supply for Israel’s growing population.

In this time of economic uncertainty, you can count on an AFMDA charitable gift annuity.

To learn more, contact Jeff Lipkin at 646.388.7518 or legacy-giving@afmda.org.

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Do you know someone whose life was saved by MDA? Your story could be published in a future issue of The Pulse. Email info@afmda.org with “Newsletter” in the subject line. For updates from AFMDA, please visit www.afmda.org/sign-up-for-our-e-newsletter.
2019 Annual Campaign for Magen David Adom

How your gift can save lives in Israel.

$25,000
Provide maintenance, insurance, and fuel for an MDA ambulance for 3 years and cover 500 ambulance trips when a medical emergency strikes.

$18,000
Equip the new MDA Marcus National Blood Services Center with a plasma freezer to store the lifesaving fluid for patient treatment.

$10,000
Restock and supply the internal equipment for a new ambulance, including the gurney, EMT folding chair, backboard, and straps. Approximately 100 are needed each year.

$7,500
Process, test, and store 200 units of donated blood that will help protect the lifeblood of Israel.

$15,000
Supply a child-size smart training mannequin to help training for the most realistic medical emergency scenarios involving children.

$5,000
Help keep struggling hearts beating with 2 defibrillators.

Saving lives. It’s in our blood — and it’s in yours, too.