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EOC TECH STUDENT ASSISTS WITH BIRTH WHILE ON THE JOB

(CHOCTAW, Oklahoma) On-the-job training takes on a new meaning for EMT Paramedic student, Thomas Combs. Shortly after midnight on July 24th, while on a routine clinical shift with EMSA of Oklahoma City, the ambulance he was assigned to answer the call of a woman in labor. Upon their arrival, it became apparent the expectant mother was in active labor and needed to be transported to a local hospital.

Lucas Qualls, the EMT Paramedic in charge of the clinical, appeared to be calm and collected but the woman's contractions continued with more frequency. Both Qualls and Combs monitored her vital signs and timed her contractions first at 3 minutes apart, then escalating to 2 minutes apart.

Driving the ambulance was Mackenzie Poindexter, an EMT Basic. As the contractions escalated, making the situation more urgent, Qualls asked the driver to stop the vehicle.

Combs said, "Before we had come to a complete stop, the baby's head became visible."

Once Poindexter pulled the vehicle safely off the street she moved to the back, assisting as needed.

Having no children of his own, Combs, a twenty-one year old, recalls the event saying, "It all happened so fast. I was composed on the outside but anxious inside."

"It's very rare for students or paramedics to deliver babies while in route to a hospital," says T.J. Reginald, EOC Tech Paramedic Instructor. "Fortunately, it was an uncomplicated delivery and the mother was able to take care of most of the birthing issues."

"It was a good clinical for Thomas to observe and even better that the mother and baby are fine," continues Mr. Reginald.

Once the baby was born, Combs suctioned the mouth and nose while Qualls clamped and cut the cord. The mother held the baby in her arms for the remainder of the drive.

When asked what Thomas Combs did following the twelve hour clinical he says, "I called my cousin who is an LPN because I knew she would appreciate what had just happened."

“I thought it was a good experience, but one I hope only happens once in a career,” he says with a smile.

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For more information, please contact Dorothy O’Boyle, EOC Tech.