

## TECHNOLOGY

# Safety App Empowers Students, Offers Peace of Mind for Parents

NewsUSA

(NU) - Sending the kids to college means letting go, but it doesn't mean disconnecting, especially when it comes to safety.

Newly minted college students may think they are invincible, but approximately 4 million young adults arrive in emergency rooms each year because of car accidents, sexual assaults, medical illness, accidental injuries, alcohol poisonings and drug overdoses, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Especially in today's era of heightened security concerns, parents are eager for ways to ensure their college student's safety, and the Umergency app can help.

The app was created by Gail Schenbaum, the mother of a college student who received a middle-of-the-night phone call from her daughter as she was being taken to the emergency room with a partial amputation. Ms. Schenbaum did not have any emergency contact information for her daughter's college, local hospitals, police department, or even roommates.

That experience inspired Ms. Schenbaum to help college families navigate any emergency or safety situation. Available to download in the App Store and Google Play, Umergency offers a range of safety and security resources for students, parents, friends, and family members.

Key features include an Urgent Alert beacon that notifies parents and other trusted contacts when immediate help is needed and pinpoints the student's GPS location.

On the flip side, an "I am safe" function alerts these contacts when the student is out of harm's way.

The app also includes on-campus safety information specific to the student's school, and allows the student to enter data and choose emergency contacts with whom to share it. Contact information for local police, fire departments, emergency centers, and urgent care personnel are accessible, as well as campus health services, including



psychological and other after-hours hotlines.

Additional features of the app include the ability to upload and share a secure copy of the student's health insurance card, as well as a digital medical consent form that allows medical staff to speak with the student's trusted friends and family and provide confidential information.

An app can be an important tool, but it's not a substitute for conversations about safety basics. Parents can set the stage for a safer college experience by talking to their students before they get busy with dorm-room decorating.

The following questions are a good way to get started and open up a dialog:

- Do you feel there is enough security on campus?
- What are the school's safety procedures to deal with a campus crisis?
- Does the school conduct periodic practice drills to test its emergency preparedness?
- How does the campus notify students and parents in case of an emergency?
- What type of emergency facilities are available on campus, including mental health services?

The Umergency app is currently available for free to college students in the United States, and costs \$9.99 per year or \$19.99 for lifetime access for parents, family members, or other non-students.

To download the app or learn more, go to <http://www.umergencyapp.com>.