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DHEC receives grant to strengthen emergency medical services in S.C.

The Duke Endowment has awarded a multi-year grant to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Division of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma to fund statewide performance improvement initiatives, the agency reported today.

The purpose of this grant is to implement a South Carolina EMS Data System using a group of applications developed and maintained by the EMS Performance Improvement Center. These applications are the Prehospital Medical Information System (PreMIS), Credentialing Information System (CIS) and the EMS Toolkit Project and will provide a modern web-based interface to promote quality EMS service delivery, resource management, and patient care.

Data collected and maintained within this new South Carolina EMS Data System will provide valuable insight to identify, evaluate, and drive local and state EMS initiatives in areas such as education, operations, disaster planning, resource allocation, advocacy, policy, and finance. The use of the EMS Toolkits within South Carolina's EMS Systems will provide guidance through proven performance indicators to improve and optimize patient care at the local EMS System and community level.

These applications have already been successfully implemented in North Carolina as they were developed and maintained by the EMS Performance Improvement Center (EMSPIC) which is located within the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The EMSPIC will also provide technical assistance to DHEC Division of EMS and Trauma in implementing and maintaining the SC EMS Data System that is initially being funded by The Duke Endowment.

"The Duke Endowment grant will support projects aimed at accelerating EMS system response times and will provide direct assistance to the state's 46 counties," said Alonzo Smith, director of DHEC's Division of EMS and Trauma. "The grant is monumental for the South Carolina EMS system. It will provide for a statewide electronic EMS data system and promote policy development, educational programs, personnel performance and patient care. The project will also reinforce the use of applied scientific knowledge for decision-making."

Smith said about 14,000 EMS events occur in South Carolina each week. As the primary point of contact for callers seeking medical assistance, EMS systems provide a range of services from instructing administration of emergency care to the speedy dispatch of EMS units or ambulances.

Smith said the grant will provide the necessary resources to accelerate EMS response times even more.

"We appreciate the support that the Duke Endowment has provided for this vitally important data project," Smith said. "The grant will have a positive impact on our state's EMS system for many years to come."

The Duke Endowment, located in Charlotte, seeks to fulfill the legacy of the late James B. Duke by improving lives and communities in the Carolinas through higher education, health care, rural churches and children's services.

For more information, visit <http://www.emspic.org>.