



State of North Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services

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**Grant from The Duke Endowment provides  
critical ambulance cardiac resuscitation equipment**

RALEIGH – North Carolina patients with a life threatening illness or injury will have a better chance of survival through a \$2.15-million grant awarded this month by The Duke Endowment to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services.

Each year, EMS systems provide emergency care to more than 1.1 million people in North Carolina, of whom 7,500 will have suffered a cardiac arrest and another 100,000 will have a condition that could develop into cardiac arrest or require aggressive treatment and monitoring. Across the county-based EMS systems in North Carolina, cardiac arrest survival rates vary from as low as 5 percent to as high as 40 percent. The national average survival rate for an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is less than 7 percent.

This grant will provide medical devices to EMS agencies and assist EMS professionals in rapidly identifying patients who are experiencing a life threatening event as well as provide vital information guiding the correct treatment. These devices also can assist EMS in identifying which patients require hospitals specializing in heart, stroke, trauma, or intensive care.

Currently one-third of North Carolina's 1,000 on-duty EMS ambulances and response vehicles do not have capnography equipment – which monitors carbon dioxide in a patient's breath – and one-fourth do not have 12-lead electrocardiogram (ECG) devices which monitor the heart. This grant will close that gap by providing funding to enable local EMS agencies to purchase the needed devices. The end result will be improved response, care and outcomes for patients experiencing life threatening illness, injury, or cardiac arrest. Funding will focus on in-service units that need the equipment.

"We are grateful to The Duke Endowment for providing these critically needed funds," said Lanier M. Cansler, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. "We're also grateful to our partners at the EMS Performance Improvement Center at the UNC-Chapel Hill Department of Emergency Medicine for their support in helping us to recognize the need. Once this specialized equipment is in place, it will greatly increase the chances of survival for cardiac arrest patients in their service areas."

Gene Cochrane, president of The Duke Endowment, said that through all of its health care grants, the Endowment is committed to projects that will enhance the lives of individuals in our region.

**(MORE)**



## **(Grant from The Duke Endowment, Page Two)**

“When more response vehicles have access to this important equipment, more people in crisis situations will receive quality care,” he said. “We are pleased to play a role in strengthening emergency medical services in North Carolina.”

The funds will be made available through the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), which is part of the Division of Health Service Regulation, and the EMS Performance Improvement Toolkit – Cardiac Arrest Program.

Drexdal Pratt, chief of the N.C. OEMS, said there will be an application process for those needing the equipment. All EMS agencies submitting an application for funding that have in-service vehicles currently not equipped with these devices will be provided the funds necessary to meet the need.

The grant could provide as many as 282 electrocardiogram devices and up to 350 of the devices that measure carbon dioxide levels in exhaled breath. “It is an indicator of how well the patient is breathing and how well the patient is metabolizing, internally,” Pratt said. “It is considered the standard of care for EMS systems in the placement and monitoring of airways that are used to ventilate or breathe for patients who cannot on their own.”

The North Carolina College of Emergency Physicians has strongly recommended that the N.C. OEMS require both devices to be present on every in-service EMS vehicle in the state and the equipment has been part of the state’s EMS treatment protocols for the past eight years.

The Duke Endowment, located in Charlotte, N.C., seeks to fulfill the legacy of James B. Duke by improving lives and communities in the Carolinas through higher education, health care, rural churches and children’s services. Since its inception, the Endowment has awarded nearly \$2.7 billion in grants.

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