

# THE DUKE ENDOWMENT BOASTS EMS SUCCESSES

## Public-private partnership is leveling disparities in emergency care

The Duke Endowment has granted more than \$5.5 million between 2004 and 2007 to reduce disparities in emergency care and improve EMS response times throughout North and South Carolina. However, many outside of the EMS community are just learning about the success of this extraordinary partnership.

For the first time this year, TDE highlights on its Web site the centralized EMS database system and the EMS Performance Improvement Toolkit Project it has helped fund—a testament to the incredible progress realized through this unique public-private partnership.

“Until now, they have not included EMS in their overall portfolio of activities announced to the public, said Cindy Raisor, RN, the South Carolina EMS data project coordinator for the EMS Performance Improvement Center. “This was huge leap of faith for them, and it’s a tribute to the extraordinary work that we all do as a team.”

The Web site boasts, “The EMS project is receiving national and international attention. As a result of this work, North Carolina is one of the first five states to begin providing data to create a national EMS database. The national project is coordinated by EMSPIC and the National EMS Information System.”

Further, the EMS “toolkits” developed in North Carolina are being used as a model to create Web-based reports from the National EMS Database and are becoming a resource for other agencies throughout the U.S.

For those unfamiliar, EMSPIC administers six EMS toolkits covering system response, trauma care, cardiac arrest care, acute cardiac care (STEMI), acute stroke care and acute pediatric care. The Web-based reporting packages collect and analyze system data for the benefit of the individual agency as well as the EMS community at large.

“The first toolkit was the EMS System Response Toolkit, and TDE provided \$2 million to the state EMS office, which then handed those funds out to the EMS agencies to improve their response times,” said North Carolina EMS Medical Director Greg Mears, MD, EMSPIC Director

and co-investigator for NEMSIS. “We now have an application in to [TDE] to work on the next one, which is cardiac arrest. It’s a long-term initiative that will eventually work through all the toolkits.”

### Measures for investment

Key to the partnership’s success is the statewide data system. Prior to 2004, TDE funded ad hoc EMS projects but hesitated to make a significant financial investment without measures for performance improvement.

“The Duke Endowment came to us and said, ‘Look, we’ve been buying a lot of equipment and paying for a lot of education and computers, but when I go back to my trustees, I can’t show them that we’ve made any difference in EMS or the care provided to the citizens in the state,’” Mears said. “We worked with them to identify ways that we could use the state data system and then develop the performance improvement toolkits that allow the local systems to measure themselves and allow us to provide [TDE] with areas of need or disparity across the state. When they know what and where the need is, they’re willing to provide funding to address that need.”

A public-private partnership of this magnitude is unusual, but not impossible to replicate in other states.

“The biggest thing we’ve learned in this process is that The Duke Endowment Foundation takes much more of a Wall Street-type financial approach in that they invest where there is a certainty of a return on the investment,” Mears said. “The partnership—by using the state EMS data system and objective performance measures—gives them the certainty that they’re going to get that return on their investment, so, therefore, they’re willing to make a long-term commitment.

With the economy straining government resources, agencies may want to consider looking for private sources of funding. “There are opportunities for EMS to engage in these types of partnerships,” Raisor said. “The public-private partnership can be done. We expressed to them a need in 2003, and they gave voice to that need.” ■

To learn more about the EMS activities funded by The Duke Endowment, please see “Foundation Provides Millions to Improve Response Times” (*EMS Insider*, January 2008), or you can also visit [www.dukeendowment.org/issues/improving-quality-of-health-care/ems-overview](http://www.dukeendowment.org/issues/improving-quality-of-health-care/ems-overview). Learn more about EMSPIC at [www.emspic.org](http://www.emspic.org) and NEMSIS at [www.nemsis.org](http://www.nemsis.org).



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### NAEMSE Names President, Seeks Presentations

In September, Chris Nollette, NREMT-P, LP, took the reigns as president of The National Association of EMS Educators. A charter member of NAEMSE, Nollette is a nationally recognized EMS educator who has established five degreed and accredited EMS college programs. He is a coauthor of the NAEMSE textbook *Foundations of Education: An EMS Approach*.

In other association news, NAEMSE is now accepting presentation proposals for its 2010 Education Symposium scheduled September 9–13 in Schaumburg, Ill. The deadline for submissions is Nov. 9. For more information, visit [www.naemse.org/symposium2010/present](http://www.naemse.org/symposium2010/present). ■