



Rural Health Community Systems, Inc.

1998 ~ 2005

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Funded by the
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Office of Rural Health
Rural Health Development Grant
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INTRODUCTION

Rural Health Community Systems, Inc. has come a long way from the late 90's when various local supporters decided a closer look at the Steuben County EMS system was needed. RN Patricia Cole, an emergency department nurse formally requested that the New York State Police personnel become trained in and equipped with automated external defibrillators (AED). After persistent and thought-provoking efforts on her part the New York State Police Superintendent gave approval for a test project.

During the same period a consortium from Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital, Noyes Memorial Hospital and Rural/Metro Medial Services had begun to consider the very same question of preparedness. Representatives from all these organizations met to consider how to improve access to Emergency Medical Services in rural Steuben County.

Soon a New York State Department of Health Office of Rural Health Development Grant was applied for to organize a rural health network with the purpose of improving access to Emergency Medical Services.

Needless to say the rural health network got off to an astonishing start with the Automatic External Defibrillator training project with the law enforcement project chosen as a best practice model for the rest of New York State Police.

This significant beginning could not have happened without the excellent commitment from the initial hard working members of the rural health network. Over the course of the next few of years the original membership of the New York State Police, Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital, Rural/Metro grew to include the Steuben County Chapter of the American Red Cross, Steuben County Sheriff's Office, Steuben County office for the Aging (RSVP); the Steuben County Emergency Management Office, the faith community, Industry & Business Volunteers and EMSTAR (formally STREMS).

What follows is a summary of our journey so far.

SUCCESSFUL “STAND ALONE” PROJECTS

PARAMEDIC INTEGRATION ~

An initiative of Rural Health Community Systems, this Paramedic/Emergency Department staff integration project was seen as pioneering and revolutionary as staff from each entity was cross-trained and credentialed in each other’s sector. This project is now an essential part of the prehospital delivery service provided by Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital and Rural/Metro Medical Services. This component is now considered “Stand-Alone” as it receives no concrete assistance from Rural Health Community Systems.

LAW ENFORCEMENT – 1ST RESPONDER & CPR-AED TRAINING ~

The entire compliment of Sheriff Deputies in Steuben County and several New York State Police in this Zone have received CPR-D and/or ‘Train-the-Trainer’ training or better. The New York State Troopers and Sheriff’s Department component is now considered “Stand-Alone” as they now have in-house instructors.

SUCCESSFUL “MEDIA” PROJECTS

EMS NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY ~

The rural health network commissioned an EMS Assessment. The study provided the rural health network a tool and guide for continued planning and development of prehospital service delivery in Steuben County.

- Volunteers as Human Resources
- Volunteer/workplace fine-tuning
- Volunteer selection to meet squad needs
- Recruitment and retention – planning; interviewing, mentoring, monitor, exit interviews
- Handling volunteers grumbling
- Leadership skills
- Team Building
- Managing people; supervision
- Communication Skills – listening
- Finance and accounting for the non-financial manager

Beginning with that appraisal came the strength and energy to take on projects and tasks that have succeeded in refining and extending the chain of survival. Clearly men and women who volunteered to train as Emergency Medical Services providers never entered the field to “manage” the volunteer corps. As advocates one of our functions became to develop ways in which we could help the managers (Captains) manage.

EMS VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION MANUAL ~

The EMS Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Manual is now in distribution. These Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Manuals are also being used by JET in the network training programs for EMS Volunteers. This publication is an example of an excellent instrument that could and should be a part of every EMS provider’s orientation.

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EMS HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOLS ~

This EMS Handbook for Schools has been an invaluable tool for teachers to use in their classrooms. Many teachers are unaware of the hours of medical treatment training needed to be an EMS provider and the complex systems needed to be in place to maintain this critical safety net for the rural communities. The *EMS Handbook for Schools* developed and printed by the network was distributed to school district personnel throughout Steuben County. Handbooks were also distributed to local EMS Squads. The book is divided up by age levels ~ elementary, middle and high school so that Volunteer squad personnel can use the Handbook as a guide when asked to present to school children. Several hundred of these Handbooks have been distributed to school personnel throughout the county by the EMS Youth Corps Coordinator.

NON-URGENT MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY ~

The Non-Urgent Medical Transport Study was concluded to illustrate the depth and breath of the non-urgent, but treatment and therapeutic medical transportation problem in Steuben County. The Office for the Aging provided the mailing list and guidance in developing three surveys which were sent to (1) consumers, (2) EMS Squads, and (3) Office for the Aging transport volunteers. Data from these surveys were collected, analyzed, reported and an analysis of the issue was made and published. It is clear that there is a need for non-urgent medical transportation, especially in the rural very north and the very south sections of Steuben County. These are also the areas where EMS squads are thin particularly during the workdays.

EMS RECRUITMENT BROCHURE ~

A generic brochure was developed, printed & distributed to the EMS Association and every volunteer squad. It developed the image of an EMS Volunteer with objectivity. It has a high-quality, dependable image via color, logo and bylines that carry through and convey a professional, sophisticated medical provider presence to the target population. It gives the reader a powerful reason to act now. The brochure is clear on the basic "what, why, when and how" they can get involved and has full contact information. The local squad can easily add their own information.

EMS MEDIA DAY ~

Signifying the strong EMS Volunteer commitment in Steuben County Rural Health Community Systems invited all media to attend a luncheon where pre-hospital medical providers explained how they operate the emergency vehicles and demonstrated the equipment used to save lives. Coverage by all media was very successful.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT ~

R.H.C.S. produced two professional 30 second and 60 second "PSAs" for our local TV stations. This venue for recruitment and retention has a long shelf life. The rural health network investment was matched by STREMS.

EMS VOLUNTEER MANUAL ~

The Volunteer instruction booklet is a guide for squad leaders. It gives the Emergency Medical Services recruitment coordinator a step-by-step "how to" process to recruit and retain new volunteer personnel. The purpose of this handbook is to offer information and practical assistance in the critical role of finding the right volunteers for your organization and helping these volunteers work more effectively, find satisfaction, and continue working as part of the team. It goes without saying that keeping trained volunteers will save you time and money. Studies have shown that Volunteers who enjoy what they are doing and are committed to the squad will also actively recruit more volunteers for your program. This guide offers information and practical assistance. It will help you recruit and retain, and in return, build a bigger and better squad.

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT ~ www.rhcsys.org

The Rural Health Community Systems web site defines our services. It explains what benefits we offer; what problems we solve; our experience; it introduces the rural health network; it serves as a reminder and it offers follow up.

SUCCESSFUL “TRAINING” PROJECTS

PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATION – PAD (CPR-D) TRAINING, ~

The Rural Health Community Systems sponsored community by-stander training programs have successfully trained over 1,350 community by-standers in CPR-Defibrillation. The Rural Health Community Systems Partners dedicated themselves to saving the lives of sudden cardiac arrest victims by educating the public about AEDs and the need for early defibrillation.

PAD in SCHOOLS ~

Rural Health Community Systems develop guidelines and plans for utilization of Public Access Defibrillation and AED's in rural schools. The network trained core teams of volunteers in the schools. Training in the Steuben County Schools has been wide-spread. This project then focused on “Train-the Trainer” efforts in the schools. Through the program four teachers from Steuben County have become Red Cross instructors and continue to offer the course to their students. And two more teachers are currently on the list to become instructors vis-a-vie our project. Schools in Steuben County that currently have instructors are Jasper-Troupsburg, Prattsburgh, Steuben County BOCES at Cooper Plains, and Hornell all of which can now be considered “stand alone”.

CAMP “RTE” ~

Beginning in 2001 and twice every summer since, Rural Health Community Systems sponsored a training course for teenagers 14 to 18 years of age called “Camp RTE” (Responding to Emergencies with the American Red Cross Steuben County Chapter). Each camp included a 40-hour week long learning experience. The camp included the ‘Responding to Emergencies’ American Red Cross course, which is 24 hours long, plus leadership and team building techniques for the remaining 16 hours. The participants toured ambulances, advanced life support vehicles, emergency helicopters and emergency departments. The objectives of “Camp RTE” are to educate, encourage, and empower youth to be a help in an emergency salutation; learn new skills; meet new people; and gain important characteristics like self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and self-awareness.

EMS YOUTH CORPS ~

The EMS Youth Corps, designed especially for teens, teaches “Responding to Emergencies” in Steuben County schools. This outreach effort has received a positive response from the education community. Combined with Camp RTE, the network offers teenager’s choices for career direction and incorporates a broad health, leadership, team building and safety program preparing the teenagers for preventing, and/or responding to emergencies. Overall seven hundred sixty-three students have been trained using the RTE course and over seven hundred and fifty students have seen a presentation about the EMS Youth Corps.

For the younger children the Youth Coordinator uses the robot “Andy the Ambulance” to attract and educate young children at schools and community events. Developing interest in youth is considered the network’s long term investment in the future.

LAERDAL ON-LINE TRAINING PROGRAM ~ ST-RESCU

This partnership with regional rural health networks afforded the network to purchase the equipment

for our joint EMS recertification project. This regional project is designed to meet individual scheduling needs, which is a huge issue for volunteers.

Laerdal, developer of the Interactive Learning Equipment, or the HeartCode Interactive Learning System, which is a computer-based self-learning system for the American Heart Association ACLS and BLS (Healthcare Provider and Heartsaver AED) courses. Students (EMS Volunteers) review the reference material and have their skills evaluated by the software. Upon completion of the program, students receive an American Heart Association course completion (ACLS only) or renewal (BLS & ACLS) card.

- American Heart Association product
- 24-hour availability
- Convenient and economical training alternative
- Students complete the program at their own pace and at a time convenient for both the administrators and students
- Automatic recording of students' results aids the administrator in meeting reporting requirements
- Training based on national curriculum

Each student is assigned a unique tuition key that allows one-on-one interactive education and evaluation. There is a tuition fee associated with these keys. The Rural Health Community Systems has bought a large number of keys that active members of Steuben County Volunteer EMS Corps can use for free. Laerdal understands that all training organizations have different needs and they have customized a Heartcode package to meet our needs.

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR COURSE

This especially designed for Rural Health Community Systems Medical Director Course was the first such course held in New York State. (September 2003) The course was excellent and very enlightening. The verbal and written reviews of the course were very positive. The people in attendance included physicians, ER managers, EMS paramedics and STREMS personnel. The consensus was that the information provided went a long way in helping to clarify roles. Mic Gunderson of HealthAnalytics, Eric Davis, MD of URMC and Evan Mayfield of US Department of Health and Human Service, Office of Rural Health Policy and the Continuing Professional Education Department at the URMC did an excellent job. This outstanding course for EMS Medical Directors was stimulating, gave outstanding direction, links and front-line guidelines to the principal prehospital leader. See conference notes at:
<http://www.healthanalytics.net/conferences/cmmorems/default.htm> EMS

EMS LEADERSHIP TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

*Rural Health Community Systems in cooperation with JET and the Steuben County EMS Association developed this free **Continuing Ed** training program specifically for Emergency Medical Services Volunteers.*

(1) **Leading Your Team in Recruitment & Interviewing Skills**

What makes a strong leader? Manager and supervisor are labels that are often used interchangeably in job descriptions. You may or may not carry either title, but neither automatically makes you a leader. This seminar will discuss what makes a good leader and the characteristics of strong leaders. Interviewing skills are essential tools used by supervisors and managers. This

seminar will strengthen your interviewing skills. Participants will review the basics of interviewing along with the legal considerations.

(2) Managing With Impact

A positive force in any organization requires finely honed management skills and techniques. This seminar will focus on the internal aspects of skills development. EMS participants will discuss how to obtain maximum results using a powerful, positive image. Gain commitment from your volunteers within your organization by understanding what key traits impact them. Managing with Impact will help you motivate volunteers and set a model for excellence that will boost performance across your entire organization.

(3) Retaining Your Workforce By Listening & Mentoring

What keeps volunteers coming back? What makes them leave? What makes them perform consistently at peak levels? This seminar explores the relationship between the EMS squad captain and the EMS volunteer. People are Emergency Medical Services' most valuable asset. Therefore, it is vital that there is a fully developed system that monitors key factors such as: Empowerment, Accountability, Communication, and Recognition. Listening skills are essential tools for effective squad captains. This seminar will assist you in improving your listening skills which will benefit you both professionally and personally. Also discussed will be the "what's and the why's" of Retention. Participants will learn the difference between mentoring and coaching. Characteristics of good mentors and those being mentored will be defined.

(4) Team Building ~ Your Most Important Tool

This seminar is designed to teach participants the basic concepts of teamwork. Understanding the underlying criteria for creating an effective EMS team will enable participants to contribute to the highest potential as a team member. People with differing perceptions frequently clash, presenting unique challenges in today's workplace. Each generation brings unique experiences, expectations, attitudes, and values. This seminar will explore the unique characteristics of multiple generations and give concrete tips and strategies for working with each of them and building a winning Team.

(5) People Development - An Organizational Challenge

This seminar utilizes the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to help participants identify their inborn preferences, which may differ from their volunteers. Once these differences are identified and understood, we can be in a much better position to understand, and appreciate the differing gifts of others. This course is ideal for groups of people who work closely together. Participants will explore the relationship between the squad captain and the volunteers. Volunteers are EMS's most valuable asset. Participants will discuss what makes them perform consistently at peak levels. This course goes hand-in-hand with Team Building.

(6) The EMS Jig Saw Puzzle

What are the pieces of your organization's structure? What are the strengths and weaknesses? Participants will consider the leadership structure, service area, pre-hospital and Emergency Department interaction, recruitment and retention, and the strengths of individual members. Participants will identify their strong points and weak spots and determine how they fit in the larger EMS puzzle. We will also discuss stressors, hot buttons, limitations, and the uniqueness of each person's puzzle piece. What is the payout to the volunteers and how and when they know that it's there?

(7) Financial Management for Non-Profits: Understanding the Basics

This course will provide some basic information that will assist participants to better understand the

financial statement, financial statement analysis, budget process, and interrelationships of all areas of the business office. Plus how to “make-your-case- to your funding agency

(8) Project Management Through Leadership

Managing projects from the planning process to completion is a daunting task. Learn how to choose the project team, understand stakeholder expectations, identify component parts of projects and critical pathways, allocate time and resources, influence and direct peoples' activities and ensure a successful end. Of critical importance to successful project management is to _ understand and deal with the need for attention at two levels: at the task level and at the people level. This course details strategies for accomplishing this. This seminar will expose EMS Volunteers to the different styles, strategies, and techniques of leadership as well as examine participants' personal criteria for good leadership. The impact of various leadership behaviors and one's influence as a leader will be explored.

(9) Coping with the Stress of EMS Volunteering

Participants will discuss how making the correct personal daily choices may develop a less stressful workplace, lifestyle and attitude. Participants will examine their motivation, and develop a mission statement for living.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Critical Incident Management Trainings, which stresses the Unified Command System, incorporates key community members and representatives, a huge board with city-like structures and vehicles on it. All of those props are used to recreate real life scenarios with individual's role-playing parts on a functional exercise board. Instructors and facilitators play the roles of dispatchers and other players to keep the scenario rolling. The outcome is a better understanding from all parties of how each agency will work during a critical incident within their community.

Critical Incident Industry Response Planning and Training is needed because surveys have shown that most businesses do not have an emergency plan. Establishing partnerships with industry will begin with persuading them to understand the processes necessary to manage a medical emergency until the EMS volunteers arrive. Outcome evidence will include a standardized formula on which to build; two companies will be persuaded to participate as demonstration projects; a checklist of information about benefits and results of preparedness so participating industry can make informed decisions; improve their risk factors and help managers identify potentially effective strategies they can implement to respond in an emergency.

SUCCESSFUL “REGIONAL” PROJECTS

FILES-OF-LIFE

A regional project with three rural health networks purchased 10,000 Files of Life for senior citizens of Steuben County. They are being distributed by the Steuben County Office for the Aging, an anchor member of TRIAD. Emergency Medical Services providers will pickup the Files of Life at the home of the person in need of pre-Hospital medical services and take it to the emergency department providing important information to the medial staff at a critical time.

LAERDAL ON-LINE TRAINING PROGRAM ~ ST-RESCU
(see above)

SUCCESSFUL “ACCESS” PROJECTS

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AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATION PLACEMENTS ~

Rural Health Community Systems has offered a 50-50 formula for businesses, industry community organizations and employers to purchase AEDs at half the cost by participating in our CPR-D Training program. {Please note; that formula has been changed to a maximum of \$750.00} To date over 150 AEDs have been placed in public access locations throughout Steuben County. Over 1350 community residents have been trained in the operation of an Automatic External Defibrillator. The costs of implementing these activities that will produce an improved risk factor especially for victims of heart disease are miniscule compared to the cost of lives lost, hospitalization, rehabilitation, time lost at work, and public dollars spent.

EMS ASSOCIATION ~

The 21 autonomist pre-hospital service providers in Steuben County were previously going it alone. They faced the same problems and barriers but there was no formal communication and no common resolution to problems. As a result of the EMS study the network assisted in the establishment of a Steuben County EMS Association. The rural health network using their recruitment and retention campaign has assembled all the tools the local EMS Corps might need to improve their service delivery system. However there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. There has been a very low utilization of these 'tools'. The upshot is to work closer with the EMS Association to maximize use of these 'tools'. The training sessions for EMS volunteers will help a lot..

NOT-FOR-PROFIT INCORPORATION ~

Rural Health Community Systems, Inc. has incorporated as a not-for-profit. Our tax-exempt request has been annulled and Ira Davenport Memorial Hospital will remain our grant applicant and fiscal manager.

ANTICIPATED “ACCESS” PROJECTS

e_PCR Project ~

Four Steuben County Emergency Medical Services Squads, (Bath, Jasper, Pulteney and Wayland) will be given software & laptops for a Patient Care Reports Data Collection and Quality Assurance project. Reports from improved data collection and communication software especially designed for this purpose will accelerate the continuing quality improvement, tracking and trending procedure. The software & hardware will assist in effectively follow & development of prehospital service delivery and Continuous Quality Improvement. Providing each of the four squads with one personal computer will result in improved data collection, recertification opportunities, networking, and communication.

EMS YOUTH CORPS ~

Growth and progress of the EMS Youth Corps has been substantial in the last year. Schools are now buying into the project of training high school students in the “Responding To Emergency” course. Several schools have faculty now trained as Trainers to perpetuate the program. The rural health network would like to investigate conducting a Certified First Responder course for youth in the future. Perhaps even an Emergency Medical Services –B Training course. The EMS Youth Corps Coordinator will need further training to become a Certified Lab Instructor, which would lead the program to self-sustainability. As a Certified Lab Instructor, our EMS Youth Corps (*actually the course sponsor*) Coordinator could be reimbursed by State Department of Health

The Rural Health Community Systems will facilitate access to quality emergency health care through innovative partnerships. Rural Health Community Systems will accomplish this community access through improvement of the three "T"s:

***Training
Treatment
Transport***

**Rural Health Community Systems, Inc.
Current Organizational Membership**

* Ira Davenport & Taylor Hospital
George Bliss, DoN
Box 350
Bath, NY 14810

*New York State Police
Sergeant Gary Whiteman
State Route 21 N
Wayland, NY 14572

* Steuben County Office of Emergency Services,
Michael Sprague, Director
Tim Marshall, Deputy
S.C. Public Safety Building
Bath, NY 14810

* Steuben County Sheriffs Office
Under Sheriff David Cole
P.O. Box 271
Bath, NY 14810

* Industry/Volunteers
Art Jones, Paramedic

166 Sly Ave
Corning, NY 14830-1821

* Industry/Volunteers
Everett Ferguson, Paramedic
Post Office Box
Rushville, NY 14424

* American Red Cross
Candi Thompson, Director
123 West Market Street
Corning, NY 14830-2519

* Steuben County Office for the Aging
Nan Hammes, Dir. RSVP
3 Pulney Square
Bath, NY 14810

* EMSTAR
Bob Rajskey, Director
315 West Water Street
Elmira, NY 14901

* EMS Association
Steve Foster
23 Bennett St,
Hornell, NY 14843