

The Georgia Department of Community Health, State Office of Rural Health

# Emergency Medical Services

*The Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program (Flex) was established by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. This federally funded program of the Department of Health and Human Services promotes quality and performance improvement activities; stabilizes rural hospital finance; and integrates emergency medical services (EMS) into rural health care systems.*

## EMS Education and Training

Surveys conducted during the past five years have acknowledged the need for a course focusing on the development of a structured rural EMS Director Education and Training Program. With funding support from Flex, the Georgia Association of Emergency Medical Services (GAEMS), in partnership with the Georgia Southern University's Jiann-Ping Hsu (JPH) College of Public Health, is currently delivering Georgia's first formal Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Rural Directors Leadership Education and Training Program.

Previous projects include:

- Developed EMS Director Education and Training Pilot Program curriculum
- Funded EMS Skills Evaluation Education and Training Grant
- Developed the web-based "EMS Online Classroom"
- Purchased computer equipment for EMS Region 8
- Purchased software licenses for EMS Region 8

As of December 2011, more than 14,000 people have used the EMS Online Classroom with more than 236,458 presentations viewed. More than 200 EMS personnel view online education and training sessions each day that:

- Enhance communication between EMS and hospitals
- Upgrade skill sets and evaluation processes
- Improve management of rural EMS resources
- Increase recognition of EMS as a vital member of the health care team
- Improve pre-hospital patient care

*Continued*



## Georgia Flex Quick Facts

Since 1999, Georgia has received more than \$4.5 million in Flex grant funding.

Flex grants have supported the conversion and sustainability of 34 rural Georgia Critical Access Hospitals.



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## An Overview of Emergency Medical Services

### Health System Development and Community Engagement

Flex grant network-development projects assisted several Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) to develop their health systems and enhance their community engagement through:

- Improved health care delivery and access to specialty services
- Shared resources to improve financial viability
- Enhanced pre-hospital health care

These programs contributed to improved access to health care, better overall health of the community and its residents and greater economic stability for the community.

### About Flex

The Georgia Flex Program, which began in 1999 through the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) in the Georgia Department of Community Health, supports the four components of the national program:

- Quality Improvement
- Financial and Operational Improvement
- Health System Development and Community Engagement
- Conversion of 34 hospitals to CAH Status – Completed