



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY HEALTH

# **NOTICE OF DIRECT AWARD**

**STATE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH**

**MERCER UNIVERSITY – HANCOCK EMS TELEHEALTH PROJECT**

**POSTING DATE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015  
CLOSING DATE: TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015, 4:00 PM**

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# **DIRECT AWARD JUSTIFICATION**

## **MERCER UNIVERSITY - HANCOCK EMS TELEHEALTH GRANT**

<b>AGENCY BACKGROUND</b>	<p>The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) was created in 1999 by Senate Bill 241 and has the responsibility for insuring over two million people in the State of Georgia, maximizing the State's health care purchasing power, coordinating health planning for State agencies and proposing cost-effective solutions for reducing the number of uninsured. Within DCH, the State Office of Rural Health (SORH) serves Georgians by improving access to health care in rural and underserved areas to improve health status and reduce health disparities.</p>
<b>PROGRAM OVERVIEW</b>	<p>The purpose of this grant is to design an efficient and effective mobile healthcare model which will combine the skills, services, and equipment of Emergency Medical Services, telemedicine, and regional healthcare providers to address the healthcare needs and challenges in underserved and impoverished areas of rural Georgia. Through this project, on-site health assessments will be completed by EMS personnel in direct contact with physicians through telemedicine, who will determine a treatment plan and disposition for each patient. Patients may be treated on site, or transported to a medical facility for further evaluation. The program will also provide follow up and/or continuous monitoring of healthcare needs of each patient enrolled in the program. The intent of this collaborative initiative is to plan and implement a pilot model in Hancock County, Georgia to collect relevant longitudinal clinical, social, and financial data to determine the effectiveness and sustainability of the proposed model.</p>
<b>AWARD JUSTIFICATION</b>	<p>The Rural Healthcare Access Project is a collaborative initiative among community, regional, and statewide partners to carry out a pilot project in (rural) Hancock County, Georgia. This project is designed to utilize Emergency Medical Services, telemedicine, and regional healthcare providers to address a number of priority health challenges facing Georgia's rural communities. Mercer University is one of America's oldest and most distinctive institutions of higher learning. Within the University, the School of Medicine was established in Macon in 1982 to educate physicians and health professionals to meet the primary care and health care needs of rural and medically underserved areas of Georgia. Mercer has consistently maintained an intense focus on innovative health improvement initiatives for rural Georgians and currently, more than eighty percent of School of Medicine graduates are practicing in rural or medically underserved areas of the state. Due to their complete commitment to serving rural Georgia and their longstanding effort to provide primary care in rural and underserved areas, no other organization or institution in the state of Georgia could ensure the effective implementation and management of the Rural Healthcare Access Project with any level of comparison to Mercer University. No other institution has invested efforts to assist Hancock County, one of the most impoverished communities in the US with the poorest health status to address EMS and response to patients experiencing a health crisis.</p> <p>Through multiple rural healthcare initiatives, Mercer University has identified specific needs and gaps existing in rural communities. Evaluation of these needs has also identified existing resources that, through effective collaboration, could address many of the healthcare challenges in rural areas. This innovative and unique concept has become the foundation for the Rural Healthcare Access Project.</p> <p>Staff of Mercer University will commit to oversee the project from implementation to conclusion. Mercer University School of Medicine will provide physician oversight during the entire project, and data collection and analysis will be provided by students attending the Master of Public Health (MPH) Program at Mercer University.</p> <p>The Rural Healthcare Access project program is the first of its kind developed for rural</p>

	<p>Georgia. This program is designed to bring collaboration between a variety of healthcare resources in rural counties with the intent of providing better access to primary care to citizens in rural communities.</p> <p>There would be little impact to the agency (DCH) but the potential positive impact for improved healthcare in rural Georgia would be significantly decreased. Mercer University has committed to include a feasibility study for replicating the program in other rural communities at the conclusion of the project, and the State of Georgia would benefit tremendously from the expertise of Mercer University and their rural centered mission.</p>
<b>AWARD(S)</b>	<b>TOTAL DIRECT AWARD FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$105,000.00</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>TO SUBMIT INQUIRIES TO THIS DIRECT AWARD NOTIFICATION</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Romero M. Stokes, Grant Manager at <a href="mailto:rstokes@dch.ga.gov">rstokes@dch.ga.gov</a> no later than 2:00 PM on Monday, March 9, 2015</p>	