

HEAL 9 Local Health Planning Initiative: County-Wide EMS Cooperative

Multi-Stakeholder Local Planning Process

- ★ **Applicant:** Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization
- ★ **Participants:** Jefferson County EMS Providers, Fort Drum Emergency Services, Hospital Emergency Departments, Hospitals, Municipalities, Physicians, Jefferson County Public Health, Jefferson County Emergency Services, Community Organizations
- ★ **Goal:** Align fragmented and unsustainable pre-hospital emergency medical care resources under a single high-functioning county-wide cooperative system
- ★ **Final Deliverable:** Detailed business and step-by-step implementation plan for an innovative and replicable emergency medical services (EMS) system that can serve as a model for other areas of New York and the United States. The challenges facing Jefferson County are not unique; the crisis in EMS is growing across New York and the nation.
- ★ **Five-Part Planning Process** 1) preliminary feasibility, 2) mitigation of major obstacles, 3) development of county-wide consensus, 4) development of comprehensive business and step-by-step implementation plan, 5) media plan throughout process to keep all stakeholders, the public and the media informed.

Background

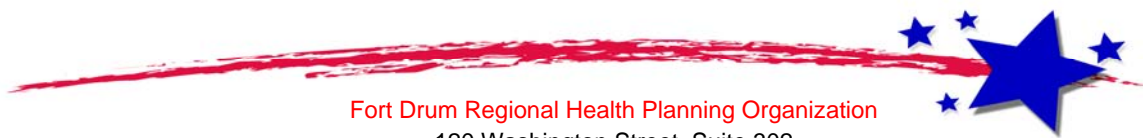
1. Jefferson County is made up of 22 towns, 20 villages, 1 small city and 1 Federal Military installation with 41 EMS service providers, including 21 that provide ambulance transport and 20 that provide first response care only.
2. Significant population growth is occurring in Jefferson County related to growth at Fort Drum that further stresses an already fragmented system.
3. A 2007 comprehensive EMS System Assessment of Jefferson County conducted by Fitch & Associates identified that:
 - The stakeholders' historic commitment to provide ambulance service in the area is strong and provides a solid base to continue efforts to enhance the system.
 - While well-intentioned, the current EMS system is not sustainable in its current form, nor is it well-suited to meet identified EMS trends or anticipated local service needs.
 - The current non-response rate or "scratch rate" of more than 33 percent is unacceptable.
 - Expanded support of local hospitals and involvement of physicians will clinically strengthen the system.
 - Reduced volunteerism and recruitment and retention issues negatively impact the system.
 - The optimal EMS system is designed from the patient's perspective providing rapid and appropriate response.
 - The best potential solution for the future to improve the EMS system is a community-based cooperative.
4. The community-based cooperative offers the best opportunity to provide high-quality, cost effective service over time while reducing paperwork, billing and administrative burdens. It is inclusive and allows individual agencies to continue to do what they do best – provide EMS care.
5. Without significant community and agency/department involvement to build community-wide consensus, a county-wide cooperative effort to improve the system cannot be undertaken. A feasibility study and implementation plan is imperative to identify the legal, financial, and organizational issues involved.

Five Part Planning Process

- ★ **Develop a Preliminary Feasibility Analysis** - To identify any major legal or organizational barriers that will impact the potential structure of an EMS cooperative. To identify issues that must be discussed and addressed during stakeholder meetings and the planning process. A consultant, who will utilize recognized legal expertise with specific experience in the EMS field, will be identified and retained through a competitive process.
- ★ **Mitigation of any Major Legal or Organizational Challenges** - To ensure that obstacles are addressed and included in planning as the process moves forward so that roadblocks do not derail the project in later stages. This task will be undertaken by the FDRHPO EMS Committee made up of multiple stakeholders and carried through by the FDRHPO Board.
- ★ **Development of County-wide Consensus on the of Role, Responsibilities and Organizational Structure of Collaborative EMS Cooperative** - To bring the concerns and needs of all parties to the forefront to be discussed so consensus is reached on the development of an improved, more resource-efficient, cooperative system to deliver high-quality pre-hospital emergency medical care. This will be achieved through a series of individual stakeholder meetings followed by a series of group stakeholder meetings, facilitated by the consultant, to bring all the parties to final consensus.
- ★ **Develop a Comprehensive Business and Implementation Plan for a Collaborative EMS System** - To provide the stakeholders, the community and the NYS DOH, with a specific plan for an innovative and replicable county-wide collaborative system of high-quality pre-hospital emergency medical care. A consultant will be contracted to develop the business plan and implementation plan. This plan will address:
 - *legal issues* including regulatory, contractual and liability;
 - *financial issues* including revenue and funding sources, expenses including administration and operations;
 - *organizational issues* including corporate structure, board make-up, municipal relationships and responsibilities, sub-contract agency responsibilities and staff responsibilities, and;
 - *step-by-step-implementation*, a blue print including all steps to take the cooperative from an idea to an operating organization.
- ★ **Keep all Stakeholders Informed of Progress Throughout the Process** - To ensure, as the project progresses, the process is open and there is a plan and a method to keep stakeholders, the public and the media informed.

This Planning Initiative will be carried out from March 2009 through March 2011. A website will be maintained with information on the initiative once the process is underway. If you have questions or would like to be kept informed contact the FDRHPO at the address below.

To the community surrounding Fort Drum, 10th Mountain Division soldiers are not just America's soldiers; they are "our" soldiers, our neighbors, our friends, and our families. The North Country Healthcare System is 100% committed to taking care of our men and women who serve. The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization is the platform that ensures the commitment translates into action.



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