



RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL COMMUNICATIONS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT 2016 – 2022



OVERVIEW

Congress authorized the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to establish the Rural Emergency Medical Communications Demonstration Project (REMCDP), a competitive grant program, with awards in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022. The grants were awarded to the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC), which proposed to use existing communications infrastructure, improve operational effectiveness, and provide communications training to enable improved rural medical services through its *First Hands Program* and *First Voice Program*, as well as other enhancements.

FIRST HANDS PROGRAM

UMMC developed the *First Hands Program* to improve the State of Mississippi’s public safety communication system—Mississippi Wireless Information Network (MSWIN)—and to extend its use to support rural medical care. The program combines medical and land mobile radio (LMR) communications education and hands-on training to empower first responders providing medical aid in rural communities. Participants receive training in communications (e.g., radio frequency and channels), medical response (e.g., trauma assessment, basic life support, bleeding control), and evacuation (e.g., air-to-ground communications).



FIRST VOICE PROGRAM

UMMC also designed a course for all Mississippi public safety communication personnel and dispatchers entitled the *First Voice Program*. The course delivers a strong foundation for all professionals involved in medical emergency and crisis communications and is designed to educate public safety communication professionals and dispatchers in the use of MSWIN. Additional course topics include communications with medical assets, among others.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- As of December 31, 2023, hosted more than 400 *First Hands* classes with 8,925 participants and 39 *First Voice* online classes for 608 participants from across Mississippi
- Purchased portable MSWIN radios, just-in-time training and operational platform vehicles, unmanned aircraft system to support operations and content development, and bleeding control kits for training participants
- Launched and enhanced a mobile smart phone application to allow first responders to reference the *First Hands Program* information while in the field, as well as other videos and podcasts
- Over the course of the awards, replaced 187 bleeding control kits based on public safety’s use of the kits to address serious and life-threatening incidents

2022 REMCDP PLANS

UMMC is building on the success of its previous REMCDP awards by continuing to offer training opportunities to public safety personnel in rural areas and exploring innovative teaching platforms (e.g., virtual reality). UMMC continues offering the *First Hands* and *First Voice* trainings to fulfill unmet course demand. UMMC also continues to expand content available in the Mississippi Center for Emergency Services (MCES) mobile application, as well as explore other social media platforms and potential resources for first responders. UMMC is investigating push-to-talk over cellular options where LMR coverage is limited to determine the costs, benefits, and serviceability of software that links cellphones directly to medical communication resources and emergency LMR. Finally, UMMC will acquire a reinforced frontline medical and communications vehicle to provide first responders’ access to close medical triage and care, as well as crucial communications resources in dangerous settings.

EXAMPLE FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES

CISA continues to work to improve rural emergency medical communications through various activities where REMCDP information and knowledge can be shared. This includes outreach to rural communities and states with significant rural populations; integration of program outcomes into CISA service offerings; development of tools, templates, and training materials; application of best practices to the Department’s current and future demonstration projects and grants; and replication of the *First Hands Program* and *First Voice Program* in other communities. Figure 1 depicts how CISA is transferring REMCDP information and knowledge to rural communities and beyond.



Figure 1: REMCDP Benefits to Other Communities

In late 2022, CISA launched a technical assistance program entitled the Rural Emergency Communications Operational Rapid Assistance Package (O-RAP) to implement REMCDP successes in rural communities across the nation. O-RAP objectives are to identify immediate needs associated with emergency communications for rural medical care; provide tools such as plans, policies, and procedures to quickly address identified needs; train jurisdictions and communities on using the provided tools; and apply and test those tools via tabletop or functional exercises. Direct any technical assistance requests to your state or territory’s [Statewide Interoperability Coordinator](#).

TO FIND OUT MORE

For more information on REMCDP, visit cisa.gov/remcdp or contact ECD@cisa.dhs.gov.