

## EMS Division Announces C.A.R.E.S. Program

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### Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) remains a major unresolved public health problem; each year in the United States alone, sudden cardiac arrest strikes more than 350,000 people – nearly 1,000 per day – making it the third leading cause of death. Due in part to the unexpectedness with which SCA strikes, most of these victims die before reaching a hospital. Currently, the chances of surviving a SCA in the United States are less than one in 20. Experts agree that many of the deaths due to SCA are preventable and that available science and technology, if appropriately applied, could reduce them significantly at a relatively low cost.

Rowan County's Emergency Medical Services Division (EMS) is working with Duke Clinical Research Institute, that is partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Emory University School of Medicine to track incidences of cardiac arrest. This program is known as RACE CARS, which stands for Regional Approach to Cardiovascular Emergencies Cardiac Arrest Resuscitation System. Locally the program is called Rowan EMS C.A.R.E.S. (Cardiac Arrest Registry to Enhance Survival). The goal is to increase overall out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates by 50% over five years.

This is a major step to improve cardiac arrest survival. Although cardiac arrests are a small fraction of all EMS calls, they serve as an excellent surrogate to quantify overall EMS System performance. A cardiac arrest event activates the entire EMS system, from bystanders, first responders, EMS, through hospital care. The project will help our EMS system identify who is affected, when and where cardiac arrest events occur, which elements of the system are functioning properly, which elements need more work, and how changes can be made to improve emergency cardiac care, and in turn cardiac arrest outcomes.