

EMS Profile: Montgomery County Hospital District

About us: The Montgomery County Hospital District (MCHD) is located on the outskirts of Houston. The District was created by special legislation in 1977 to provide indigent care for Montgomery County.

MCHD was asked to highlight some of its innovative ideas in three recent issues of *JEMS*. These articles discussed the District's approach to using data in EMS, selection of an ePCR vendor and wellness improvements.

Number of personnel and calls: District employees respond to 40,000 calls annually with a total workforce of approximately 251 employees. The Communication Center became an Accredited Center of Excellence in 2007 and also provides service for PHI and the Conroe Fire Department. MCHD is also a beta test center for the National Academy of Medical Dispatch and served as the pilot location in the Texas Regional EMD project.

Number of units and capabilities: Daily, as many as 22 MICUs cover 1,100 square miles and a population of 425,000. MCHD's internal aircraft-style preventative maintenance program for its 29 ambulances and its support vehicles is designed to limit critical failures that could negatively impact patient outcomes. Standard equipment on each unit includes CPAP, IV pumps, the ResQ-Pod, nitrous oxide, EZ-IOs and hydraulic stretchers. A comprehensive STEMI program features 12-lead ECGs and partners with five local hospitals where EMS activation of the catheterization lab achieves best practice EMS-to-balloon times. Last year, MCHD rolled out an induced hypothermia protocol for post resuscitation management.

Education: The MCHD Clinical Practice Department provides continuing education and traditional EMS certification courses. Internal resources allow for a specialized, intensive curriculum to meet the evolving needs of MCHD.

Community participation: MCHD coordinates a comprehensive, county-wide first responder program, which includes 16 fire departments, seven police agencies and many corporate



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partners. The county-wide AED program features more than 200 AEDs. MCHD provides CPR/first aid training to the community, health care professionals and the private sector. "Kids Don't Float" lifejacket loaner stations, SafeSitter training and child safety seat inspections are also featured.

Wellness and employee involvement: MCHD's dedication to its employees is equally as important as the public it serves. A recent success story is the District's employee-led wellness team. With assistance from the wellness team, a Weight Watchers group was formed; collectively the group has lost more than 1,200 pounds. Also, numerous people have stopped smoking or are no longer required to take insulin or cholesterol-lowering medication as a result of wellness-team-led initiatives. From a financial standpoint, insurance premiums were reduced last year, and the money saved was used to enhance

employee benefits and to refund a portion of the difference to staff as part of MCHD's Reward Builder program.

MCHD understands that employee-driven decision-making enhances employee engagement, builds leadership skills, promotes trust and relationships between those who participate and develops a greater understanding in the inner workings of the organization. Some of our employee committees include: Professional Standards; Product Review; Customer Satisfaction; Wellness; and Recruitment and Retention.

Honors: MCHD's "Montgomery County Shattered Lives" program received the 2007 DSHS Texas Public Information/Injury Prevention Award. MCHD has also earned the DSHS Public Provider Award, the Excellence in Defibrillation Award from the National Center for Early Defibrillation, and was named the National Association of EMS Physicians' Showcase System Honoree.