



CASE STUDY

Turnkey Management of an Emergency Medical Services System, Charlotte/Mecklenburg, N.C.

Background

Fitch & Associates provides short-term interim management services for ground and air programs. Longer-term assignments are serviced by MedServ, a Fitch affiliate company.

In Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Fitch & Associates was engaged to create a business structure and performance specifications for a joint EMS Agency to be operated by the county and area hospitals. The EMS Agency serves both the city and county, and is the largest EMS organization in North Carolina. The system also provides communications services to 17 other fire and public-safety organizations



Approach

Fitch brought significant expertise to the project, not only in subject matter but in the latest organizational and process management techniques. The timeframe necessary for a major organizational change process was significantly reduced through an innovative approach that includes three key elements:

- design
- operating the system during the transition
- knowledge transfer at the conclusion of the project

The Transition

Fitch provided interim management and implementation-support services during the Agency's first year of operation. Accomplishments during that transition year included:

- Improving response times to standard from 60 percent to greater than 90 percent compliance

- Implementing a countywide semiautomatic defibrillator program and providing training for more than 1,000 paid and volunteer EMT-D first responders
- Procuring and installing a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system, leading to reduced call-processing time and enhanced resource management
- Designing and procuring the new headquarters, communications and maintenance facility
- Placing an interim leadership team in Charlotte to provide day-to-day management and accomplish the transformation
- Recruiting an experienced administrator
- Operating the system within predetermined budgetary requirements



Today

The once-embattled system has been hailed as “a model for others” and “a high-performing EMS system efficiently producing a level of clinical quality and a response time performance that exists in only a handful of cities in the United States – or the world.” (*JEMS*, July 2006) It provides full service emergency and nonemergency response; designs schedules with peak load staffing to meet demand; uses dynamic, station-based fluid deployment for a response-time performance of 9 minutes 59 seconds at 90% compliance; has external oversight in operations, financial and clinical areas; and serves under a performance-based contract with benchmarking.

For More Information

Medic Home Page

<http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Medic/home.htm>

“Battlefield Charlotte: The War Over EMS,” *JEMS*, March 1997

<http://www.fitchassoc.net/download/Charlotte-EMS-1997.pdf>

“Battlefield Charlotte Revisited,” *JEMS*, July 2006

<http://www.fitchassoc.net/download/BattlefieldCharlotte-JEMS-2006.pdf>

Contact Fitch & Associates at 816-431-2600.