



# News Release

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## **Northern Maine “far better prepared for pediatric emergencies” as result of work recently completed through state grant coordinated by NMCC faculty**

**Aroostook County** - Nearly 200 first responders, emergency medical technicians, paramedics and hospital staff members from throughout Aroostook County are better prepared to deal with pediatric emergencies as the direct result of work completed through a state grant administered by Northern Maine Community College.

The award from the Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership – a division of the Maine Department of Public Safety has allowed NMCC faculty in nursing and EMS and staff in the College continuing education division to focus on educating and better equipping County emergency medical professionals. With recent completion of the grant, coordinators are reflecting on the success of the initiative.

“As a direct result of what we have accomplished through this grant, Northern Maine children will be much better served by the EMS community. Though much work remains to be done in the area of pediatric emergency education, we believe that the region is far better prepared for pediatric emergencies than it was just 18 months ago,” said Daryl Boucher, lead grant coordinator and NMCC nursing and EMS instructor.

In that time, the NMCC continuing education division has offered 13 pediatric training sessions at locations throughout Aroostook County to a total of 192 emergency and healthcare workers. According to Leah Buck, NMCC assistant dean of continuing education, session topics ranged from practical assessment to caring for the multiple trauma patient.

“Training on how to work with a critical pediatric patient wasn’t available to most of the Aroostook County emergency responders without traveling to at least Portland, and usually Boston. This grant allowed us to offer the training directly to a large number of local providers who typically wouldn’t be able to travel to a course, because of funding or time restrictions. A number of the group we trained either work as part time providers or volunteers from the smaller towns in the County. Reaching them with this training was very important and will make a huge difference on how they handle pediatric emergencies in the future,” said Buck.

In addition to the training sessions coordinated by NMCC, nursing and EMS faculty from the College have assisted in several pediatric presentations and collaborated with staff at Northern Maine Medical Center and the University of Maine at Fort Kent to present two pediatric conferences in the St. John Valley.

A second funding component under the grant was designed to support additional public awareness and education on pediatric care issues. To accomplish this Boucher engaged NMCC nursing and allied students who conducted research, completed visual presentations and participated in the first-ever Fall and Winter Sports and Recreation Show held in Presque Isle last fall. Through the event, the students reached nearly 1,500 community members.

NMCC Students also visited schools in Mars Hill and Fort Fairfield, presenting various safety topics to 60 middle- and high school-age children.

The final area funded under the grant involved the purchase of equipment to establish a resource center on the NMCC campus for area medical and emergency care professionals in Aroostook County who treat pediatric patients.

Last year the College purchased a lifepak monitor and simulator, which allows interpretation of pediatric cardiac rhythms. The equipment, housed on the Presque Isle campus and used for training by students in the College EMS, nursing and other allied health programs, is now available to assist in the education of EMS providers at all levels, as well as hospital emergency department and pediatric personnel throughout the region. In the relatively short time it has been available, it has been lent out twice for area pediatric courses.

Additional equipment purchased through the grant and now part of the repository on the NMCC campus has been lent out to 22 organizations, including area hospitals, the University of Maine at Fort Kent, and a number of County fire departments and ambulance services for use in their pediatric training programs.

“Our vision is to become the information, equipment and education center for pediatric care in this area. The work completed and equipment purchased through this grant has allowed us to take a huge leap forward in making this vision a reality,” said Boucher. “The rural pediatric education resource center will provide area hospitals and EMS providers a local resource and expertise in helping develop pediatric programs for their organizations.”

According to Boucher, the material obtained through the grant is the first substantial purchase of pediatric training equipment in Aroostook County in several years.

NMCC has been a provider of high quality EMS, nursing and healthcare education in northern Maine for over two decades. For the past nine years, through various educational initiatives, the College has focused on improving the care provided to the children of Aroostook County.

This latest initiative to develop a rural pediatric education resource center was started in 2005 with support generated through the development of the Megan Bradstreet Pediatric Critical Care Transport Fund.

Early initiatives included working collaboratively with area hospitals and EMS agencies to bring quality education programs such as the UMBC (University of Maryland Baltimore County) Critical Care Transport Program and the Pediatric and Neonatal Critical Care Transport program to Aroostook County.

Most recently, funding from the Megan Fund was used to assist in sending nine area nurses and paramedics to complete critical care pediatric clinical sessions at Boston area hospitals.

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