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Adapting to a Unique Landscape

Alaska's statewide initiative uses both innovative and practical approaches



THE CHALLENGE:

Alaska is a nature lover's paradise, with its remote wilderness and rural areas. But in these settings, resuscitation can be exceptionally challenging. To build an emergency response system to effectively treat cardiac arrest, Alaska needed to develop and implement a mix of innovative, practical and adaptable approaches.

THE RESPONSE:

Medical leaders in Alaska championed an inclusive approach to evaluate and enhance resuscitation care. The strategy deliberately included relevant policymakers and other elected officials to develop a plan that would serve as a blueprint for a statewide project endorsed and supported by the state.

Over the course of six years, the largest cities and villages – including Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks, Matsui Valley, Sitka, and Ketchikan, along with smaller settlements and Native Alaskan communities – participated in the statewide initiative that included several elements:

- Resuscitation Academies were launched, at which health experts provided trainings utilizing local resources to engineer operational strategies for their communities.
 - Trainings were adapted to suit local circumstances and environments, such as resuscitation on the ski slopes.
- Matsui Valley used high-frequency training to improve EMS resuscitation skills.
- Fairbanks secured an expanded base of community volunteers.
- The Anchorage Fire Department implemented (1) mechanical CPR trainings that demonstrated how the technology might be deployed in high-performing EMS systems, and (2) a streamlined telephone CPR program that enabled an important increase in early arrest identification and bystander CPR.



15%
survival rate

Alaska's landscape is unique, but the state consistently achieves some of the highest statewide survival rates in the U.S. at around **15 percent**.

Alaska's statewide registry and reporting process are now integrated into the **Alaska Department of Health** reporting and considered an important measure of statewide emergency response.