

## Collaborative Training Effort Helps Change Minds in Michigan

South East Regional Emergency Services Authority, Macomb County, Michigan



When Macomb County, Michigan, consolidated its 9-1-1 services into a single emergency communications center, one of the challenges was training telecommunicators from several agencies on a single telecommunicator CPR (T-CPR) protocol.

Although some telecommunicators initially resisted, the program became a success thanks in part to training that emphasized the “why.”

“T-CPR makes a difference and that’s why we got into this job,” says Cherie Bartram, executive director of the South East Regional Emergency Services Authority (SERESA), the county’s municipal consolidated 9-1-1 center. “It saves lives.”

Bringing in medics from the center’s partner agencies helped the telecommunicators see the entire chain of survival. The EMTs and paramedics who helped conduct the training could relay firsthand just how vital the pre-arrival instructions were to giving patients a chance of survival. They also got the telecommunicators out of their chairs and doing CPR themselves, so they knew just what they were asking of callers.

The field providers taught the telecommunicators the basic science of CPR and cardiac arrest, and placed a large emphasis on understanding agonal respiration, which has been shown to have a significant impact on the patient’s outcome. The training also outlined what dispatch should be listening for and what callers might describe so they can get hands to chest more quickly.

“The field providers really help people understand the reasoning behind what they’re doing,” Bartram explains.

Once SERESA’s telecommunicators gained a better understanding of the science behind T-CPR and built those relationships with providers in the field, resistance to the initiative faded quickly.

“We got into this line of work to make a difference, and so one of the best perspectives I have is to look at it, evaluate it, embrace it and not fight against it,” Bartram says. “The minute you fight against it, it becomes hard.”