

**The Virginia Office of EMS and Virginia Association of Volunteer
Rescue Squads in conjunction with the Western Virginia EMS Council
launch extensive Workforce Retention Project**

September 2004

The Virginia Office of EMS (OEMS) and the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS) in conjunction with the Western Virginia EMS Council are excited to announce a major project to address the retention issues facing many EMS agencies in our state.

An aging population requires and consumes more emergency medical and critical care services. The pool of volunteer and career EMS personnel is aging and the pool of potential EMS personnel is decreasing. Attracting and retaining volunteer EMS personnel is becoming more difficult as volunteers have less time to devote to public service. Career EMS personnel are moving on to other health care professions for better pay, benefits, and advancement.

OEMS and VAVRS are working with the Western Virginia EMS Council in Roanoke and Renaissance Resources, a Richmond based business consulting firm, to develop strategies and identify solutions to enhance the retention of volunteer and career EMS personnel.

The Retention Project objective is to develop a self-help tool kit for local EMS agencies to use in improving the retention of both volunteer and career EMS personnel. The tool kit will have structured, interactive learning experiences designed to optimize the productivity and retention of EMS personnel through their life cycle of service.

The project will be conducted in two phases:

1. Research will be conducted to gather demographic information on the pool of EMS personnel; identify and study successful EMS retention efforts and strategies; and identify measures of success for EMS agency retention efforts. Several focus group meetings will be conducted and EMS personnel interviewed to confirm the need for improved retention efforts, test potential tools for the kit and clarify the best method to deliver the tool kit.
2. A "tool kit" will be developed and distributed to all EMS agencies.

Information and quarterly project updates will be posted on the Office of EMS Web page on a regular basis. Updates on the Retention Project will be made in December, March and June.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Scott Winston, Assistant Director, Virginia Office of EMS at Scott.Winston@vdh.virginia.gov or 1-800-523-6019 if you have any questions.