



## Essential Education For Rural Health Care Providers Comprehensive Advanced Life Support

### What is CALS?

The Comprehensive Advanced Life Support (CALS) program provides lifesaving education to healthcare providers who work in rural and /or limited resource areas.

Developed in Minnesota in 1996 by a grassroots workgroup, CALS is a 2-day provider course /1-day skills lab for teams of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, and allied healthcare professionals who work in rural settings.

The primary focus is to train medical personnel in a team approach to anticipate, recognize, and treat life-threatening emergencies.

The CALS course includes a broad range of medical and trauma emergencies (for example: airway, pediatric, OB, strokes, heart attacks, head and spine injuries).

### Why is this Education Needed?

The recent, well-publicized need for efficient emergency response to natural disasters and homeland security threats increases the urgency of improving emergency care throughout the entire United States, including rural areas.

The Institute of Medicine(IOM) has expressed concern about the variable training emergency providers receive in initial and continuing education.

There is great interest at national and state levels to increase the quality of emergency care and renewed efforts to implement systems and protocols as well as reporting of quality measures.

Many rural hospitals are staffed by family physicians and nurses not dedicated to the emergency department but rotate there as needed.

Rural providers frequently are inadequately equipped to deal with the wide array of

medical/traumatic emergencies that present at their facilities.

Providers are constrained by limited resources such as:

- Few, if any, locally available, highly trained specialists
- Lack of high tech or individualized equipment
- Limited numbers of staff
- Infrequent exposure to significant events

Adverse rural health outcome statistics increase the significance of this need.

Recruitment and retention in rural areas is difficult. Training increases provider's confidence and satisfaction when working in rural areas.

The general public's expectations and medical-legal defined standards-of-care have created an environment that demands the quality of care in rural areas be consistent with care provided in urban, highly subspecialized medical centers.

### Why Use CALS?

CALS is designed for **rural healthcare** practitioners and is **one course** that covers concepts contained in many advanced life support courses.

CALS emphasizes **teamwork** in a team training environment and focus on the **Universal Approach** to emergency care of rural patients.

CALS includes all age groups from **birth to geriatrics** and identifies **equipment** essential for resuscitation.

CALS has been **well received** in Minnesota and Wisconsin, Missouri, and Texas, as well as the Department of State and is a model program to share with all states.

