

Title of Project: Rural Medical Emergency Response

Kreider Services, Inc.
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For more information--

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Kreider Services, Inc. (KSI) received a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Health Care Regulation to improve the medical emergency response in eight group homes located in rural communities of Amboy, Ashton, Franklin Grove and Stockton.

KSI has eight ICF/DD homes located in four small, rural communities. Each of these communities has a population of under 3,000, with two of the four towns having just over 1,000 residents. The 73 residents living in the ICF/DD homes are some of the most medically fragile individuals served by KSI. Their health and welfare is of primary concern. The responsibility for effective medical emergency response to crises is shared between KSI staff at the home (an internal factor) and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) unit charged with responding to medical emergencies at the small-town ICF/DD home (an external community factor).

With response time from an all-volunteer EMS system an issue, and distance from a hospital creating lengthy transport minutes, there is a need for KSI staff to be able to respond to a heart-related medical emergency even before the EMS volunteers arrive. With AED technology, a life-saving response can be initiated by KSI staff.

Also, when the community EMS volunteer arrives on the scene, it is vital that this emergency responder understand the needs of the individuals with developmental disabilities living in the small town group home. The individuals who will be in crisis may look “different” and act in unfamiliar ways; they may be unable to hear or speak; they may have behavior issues, be agitated or non-compliant. This unfamiliarity, and the potential for strong discomfort on the part of the EMS volunteer, can affect the response time and care given during a crisis. A crisis is not the best time for a volunteer from a small town to be introduced to people with developmental disabilities. The project addressed these various challenges.

With this grant KSI purchased 11 AED’s—one for each of the eight group homes in Amboy, Ashton, Franklin Grove and Stockton, one each for two medical ICF-DD homes in Dixon, and one for Kreider Center. KSI staff were trained on how to use AED’s and AED training is now a part of KSI’s First Aid-CPR course.

The project also developed a continuing education course for emergency service volunteers in the rural communities where KSI has group homes. The purpose of the course was to provide information that would help these volunteers be more knowledgeable about people with developmental disabilities and KSI group homes. The trainings were well received by EMS coordinators and volunteers, and will be offered in the future.

The purpose of the Rural Medical Emergency Response (RMER) project was to enhance the medical emergency care service available to residents of KSI’s most rural ICF-DD homes. The project has helped to strengthen the infrastructure of emergency response within the rural homes

by placing AED's in these homes and training staff on their use, and also by strengthening relationships with community-based emergency services entities, by developing and implementing a continuing education course for EMS staff and volunteers.

The project can be transferred to other rural ICF/DD homes. Many of the concerns about timely and effective response to medical emergencies in rural group settings are shared by residential services providers around the state. This is truly a life-saving proposition. The **RMER** project has created an environment that is inherently more responsive to cardiac-related and other medical emergencies. The project was technological in nature and placed state-of-the-art medical equipment in remote rural group homes. The project also focused on knowledge/relationship issues that are human-centered, and have a broader scope of influence on the total environment of medical emergency response in rural areas. Both components are completely transferable.

Kreider Services, Inc.

Kreider Services, Inc. (KSI) began in Dixon, Illinois in 1952 as a small school to provide education for youth with developmental disabilities. The agency has grown into a multi-faceted organization with over 300 staff and 150 client workers employed in rural northwestern Illinois. The mission of the agency today is to *help individuals with disabilities reach their fullest potential*. KSI is a major resource for individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities and their families in four counties—Lee, Ogle, Whiteside and Jo Daviess. The agency serves over 500 people each year including special statewide populations. KSI is one of Illinois' leading rural providers of residential services, and currently operates 25 group homes in three counties, including 12 ICF/DD homes and 13 CILA homes, serving over 220 individuals. KSI also offers employment and training opportunities, a developmental (prevocational) skills training program, a community employment program, a summer program for teens with developmental disabilities, a 0-3 early intervention program for children, a growing Special Olympics program, and numerous supportive services for individuals and families. Most people served by the agency have moderate to profound developmental disabilities and many complex medical issues. Many clients formerly lived in a state operated institution.

