



COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY

County Office Building

Jerry Jones, County Manager
501 Court Lane, Room 108, Cambridge, MD 21613
(410) 228-1700 | info@docogonet.com

George L. Pfeffer, Jr., President

Mike Detmer, Vice President

Rob Kramer, Jr.

William V. Nichols

Ricky C. Travers

NEWS RELEASE

June 3, 2026

County Receives Grant to Launch Lifesaving Whole Blood Program

At its June 2, 2026 meeting, the Dorchester County Council accepted a \$71,300 grant to fund the first year of a lifesaving Whole Blood Service Program for Dorchester County Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

The program allows Dorchester County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics to administer whole blood directly to trauma and critical patients in the field, increasing access to lifesaving blood transfusions that can stabilize patients before they reach a hospital. It aims to bridge healthcare gaps in rural regions where transport times to trauma centers are often extended.

Administering whole blood in the field represents a major advancement in pre-hospital emergency care. Unlike saline fluids, whole blood delivers oxygen, red blood cells, platelets, and clotting factors needed to treat severe blood loss.

"The ability to carry and administer whole blood in the field is a significant advancement for emergency medical care in Dorchester County," said Debbie Wheedleton, EMS Chief. "For patients experiencing severe blood loss, early access to whole blood can make a critical difference. This funding allows our paramedics to provide hospital-level interventions sooner and improve care for residents and visitors throughout our community."

The program is funded through the Maryland Rural Health Transformation Program and administered by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS).

The grant will fully fund the specialized equipment, temperature-controlled storage units, and training required for paramedics to safely manage and administer whole blood in the field. The program is slated for rollout following completion of staff training and equipment installation.

Dorchester County Emergency Medical Services is a career department with five 24/7 advanced life support units in four stations across the county.

If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Wheedleton, EMS Chief, at (410) 228-2726.

The Maryland Rural Health Transformation Program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award to the Maryland Department of Health totaling \$168,180,837.61 with 100% funding by CMS/HHS. The contents of this press release are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.