

First Ever LEADS Study Celebrates Ten Year Anniversary

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A cooperative effort of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the **LEADS** (Longitudinal Emergency Medical Technician Attributes and Demographics Study) **project celebrates ten years of research--the first study of its kind to examine the EMS professional work force.** The LEADS project was designed to collect data identifying attributes and demographic make-up of the professionals working to deliver prehospital emergency care in the United States. The data collected will provide a thorough description of the EMT population, including their work activities, working conditions, and job satisfaction.

The LEADS project is a longitudinal study that began in August 1998. It is led by a team of researchers comprised of State EMS Directors, State EMS Training Coordinators, EMS System Managers, Emergency Physicians, EMS Educators, survey researchers, and NREMT staff. Data were collected annually for LEADS. Each year, a "core survey" of similar questions was used along with different "snap shot" surveys, which examined important issues for EMS professions including ambulance safety, education and training, sleep, and occupational identity. With more than 17,000 respondents, data collection for LEADS is complete and drafts of the reports are in various stages of review by LEADS committee members. The target date for peer review of the reports is December 1, 2009, with publication scheduled for summer of 2010.

"We need to know and report more about the people we expect to perform these important and often heroic deeds," explains NREMT Director of Research, Dr. Greg Gibson. "This is our EMS workforce, which is the backbone of emergency medical services in the United States. We must learn more about these valuable individuals."

Interns, public health school graduate students at The Ohio State University, spent the past summer analyzing data and formulating initial drafts for the various sections of the LEADS report. Additionally, the services of subject matter experts were secured to produce a report ready for peer-review and publication. Dr. Gibson explains, "One of the values of having the report peer-reviewed is to receive and incorporate constructive suggestions for fine tuning the report. A peer review process holds more credibility, and is *the* standard for publishing research findings."

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