

EMS IN CRISIS:

“WHY NEW YORK NEEDS TO SAVE THIS ESSENTIAL SERVICE”



Chris Bradbury, Administrator, Village of Rye Brook, NY

Rordan Hart, Mayor, Village of Trusmansburg, NY

IS THERE A CRISIS?

“EMS leaders warn industry on verge of collapse” (Ohio)

“EMS agencies struggle to fill EMS, paramedic positions” (Michigan)

“...[EMS] Director voices concerns over EMS staff shortages” (California)

“a local County is “increasing wages for some EMS workers amid shortages” (Florida)

“...report about a man who suffered a stroke and had to wait more than 90 minutes for an ambulance” (Georgia)

“To address a continuing shortage of emergency medical technicians, cut reliance on mutual aid and keep local life-saving response fast and effective, [XXX] is hiring eight EMTs at an initial cost of \$687,000...amid long-term losses in ambulance crews throughout the state and nation” (CT)



IS THERE A CRISIS?

CONTINUED...



“...(EMS) providers serve a critical role across the commonwealth, but are facing growing financial pressures and workforce challenges.... [t]he hearing addressed workforce shortages, licensing and funding issues, and other challenges facing Pennsylvania’s EMS providers” (Pennsylvania)

“Lawmakers, EMS officials announce bill to establish rural ambulance task force as agencies risk closing its doors because of lack of staffing” (NY)

“No EMT arrives to help [municipality] resident after 911 emergency call” (Westchester, NY)

“EMS crisis in the Westchester County mutual aid system” (Westchester County, NY)

“EMS services warn of 'crippling labor shortage' undermining 911 system. “We’re not bleeding any longer — we’re hemorrhaging,” ... decadelong worker shortage exacerbated by the pandemic... In 2020, nearly a third of the workforce left... after less than a year ...[sent a letter to Congress that] warned that "our nation’s EMS system is facing a crippling workforce shortage, a long-term problem that has been building for more than a decade. It threatens to undermine our emergency 9-1-1 infrastructure and deserves urgent attention by the Congress... "I've not seen it this bad in 41 years... adding that the increasing demands of the job have caused him great anxiety“ (NBC News)

CONSIDER THE HISTORY OF EMS

1865: Birth of EMS.

1868: NYC's 1st civilian ambulance service.

1930's-1940's: Hodgepodge of private EMS service.

1950's: Beginnings of "Modern EMS". Funeral homes almost ½ of ambulances.

1966-73: Start of movement from transportation to health care.

1973: Major shifts for EMS. EMS Systems Act: 300 EMS Systems established in U.S.
Moved from US Dept of Transportation to Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare.

1980's-1990's: EMS expansion; economy down/federal funds dried up. Lead fed agency abolished. State & locals took over EMS. Standardization suffered. Emergency Medical Director position created for local medical oversight.

1999: EMS Educational Agenda for the Future. Added certification of EMS Professionals.

2005: Enhanced 911 Act.

2007: National EMS Advisory Council created.

Present: More focus on EMS pre-hospital emergency interventions: acute respiratory distress, cardiac arrest, chest pain, etc.



TYPES OF EMS COVERAGE

Most Types

Volunteers

Municipal (local gov't or county)

Not-For-Profit (NFP)

Special District

Private Company

Within Fire Department

Which Type Is Best?

Whichever Type The Local Municipal Leaders Decide!

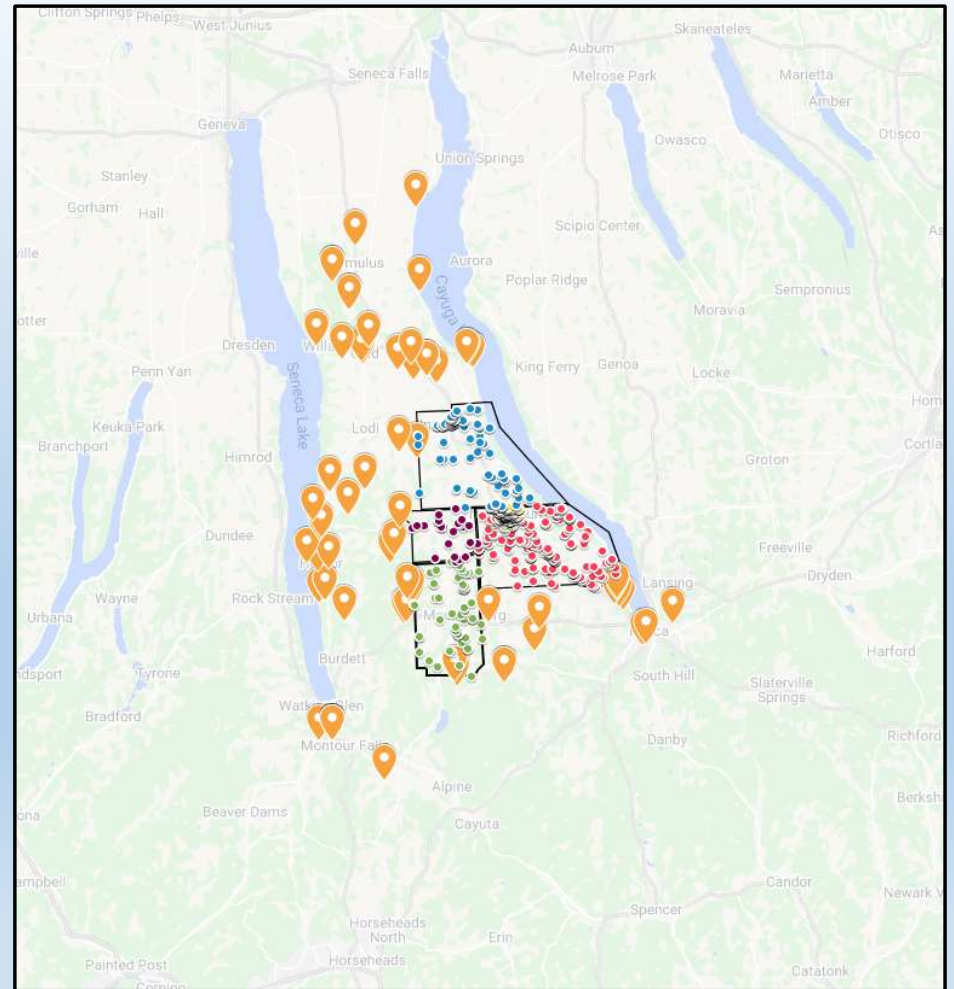
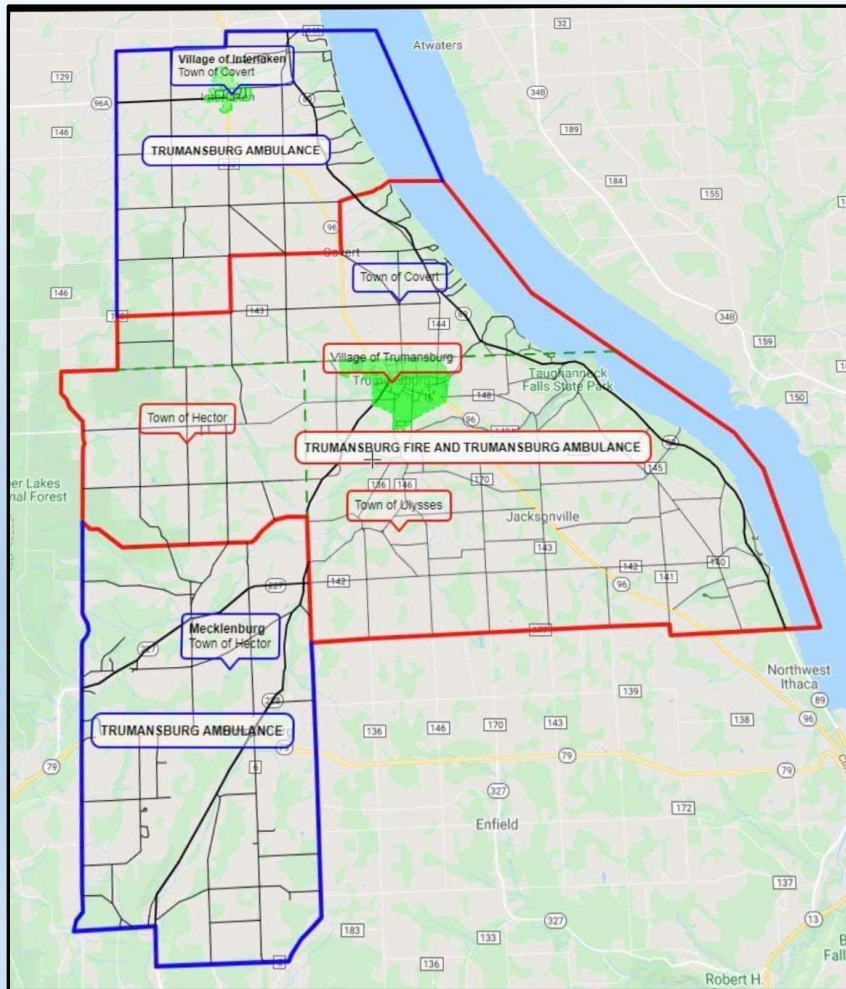
CURRENT SITUATION

This is a National Problem- but focus today will be on NYS...

- EMS is not required in NYS.
- NYS does not define EMS an “Essential” service.
- Police, Fire, and “other emergency services”.
- Major Recruitment and Retention issues (worse since COVID).
 - Too many agencies competing for a depleted pool.
 - High turnover rates.
- Lack of a “Career”- low pay, high insurance costs, no retirement.
- Most work 2-3 EMS jobs.
- Mutual aid strains. In some cases, federal EMS called in.
- Decreased revenues (Medicare/Medicaid focus on “transportation”).
- Lack of federal and state grants.
- Too many agencies in some regions not working together.
- Inconsistent training, regional priorities, standards, policies.



TRUMANSBURG COVERAGE AREA & ANNUAL EMS CALLS



WHAT IS NEEDED TO HELP EMS?

EMS must be defined as an ESSENTIAL SERVICE in NYS

Essential part of the health care delivery system.

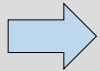
Provide early intervention health care.

Provide EQUAL access to EVERYONE.

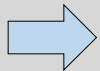
Treat employees as essential workers: Police, Fire & EMS. They are on the front line too.

EMS must be supported as a high-risk Career & Agency

As Employees

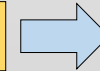


Better pay

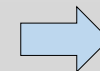


Better access
to healthcare
& retirement

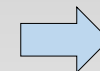
As Agency



Dedicated funding sources



Higher insurance reimbursement
for non-transport services



Regional mutual aid policies &
support for dispatching

WHAT CAN I DO?

- 1) Ask questions of local EMS.
- 2) Educate the public.
- 3) Inform the local, county, state & federal leaders and insist on support.

Develop a work plan:

- 1) Local: Compare expenditures for EMS vs. Police & Fire. Is it equitable/fair?
- 2) Focus on a recruitment and retention plan.
- 3) County: Mutual aid plans, training, communication.
- 4) Federal/State: Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement beyond transport; EMS- specific grant funding.
- 5) State: support nonpartisan legislation; state & regional plans; training.

Comprehensive Priority State Legislation has been proposed



CURRENT NYS LEGISLATION

S8432A/A9509 (Currently in Local Government Committee)

Defines EMS as Essential. Must be provided by municipalities in a reliable manner, available to everyone.

Provides access to NYSIP/Empire Plan for NFP & Volunteer EMS agencies.

Provides access to NYS Retirement benefits for NFP & Volunteers (as service credit- like FF).

Allows for the creation of EMS special districts as of right.

NYS EMS Council and Regional EMS Councils must develop statewide comprehensive and regional plans and standards.

Establishment of an EMS quality and sustainability assurance program and an emergency medical systems training program.

Development of a public service campaign for EMS recruitment; mental health & wellness programs to reduce burnout, suicide, depression.

Opportunity for EMS agencies to become accredited.

S08189B/A09164A (Currently in Health Committee)

Establishes the consolidated assistance program for EMS departments which creates a sustainable state financing mechanism for emergency medical services. Similar to CHIP's funding but for EMS.

NYS Governor's Budget (approved):

Allows for volunteer fire departments that provide EMS to receive insurance reimbursement for EMS services.

Other:

NYSHIP/Empire Health Plan's requirement that 50% of revenues must come from municipalities to make EMS employees eligible for coverage is NYS Comptrollers opinion, not a law



QUESTIONS

EMS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR US IN TIMES OF NEED...
WILL WE BE THERE FOR THEM?



Supporting resolutions and documents
available at www.ryebrook.org/ems

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