

# EMS IN CRISIS:

*“WHY NEW YORK NEEDS TO SAVE THIS ESSENTIAL SERVICE”*



Chris Bradbury, Administrator, Village of Rye Brook, NY

Susan Spear, Deputy Commissioner, West. County Dept of Emergency Services

Michael Volk, Chief, EMS Division, West. County Dept of Emergency Services

# **EMS IN CRISIS:**

***“WHY NEW YORK NEEDS TO SAVE THIS ESSENTIAL SERVICE”***

[4 MIN. VIDEO:](https://vimeo.com/716475197)

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# IS THERE A CRISIS?

“EMS ... on verge of collapse” (Ohio)

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

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“...concerns over EMS staff shortages” (California)

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“...“increasing wages for some EMS workers amid shortages” (Florida)

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

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“...‘crippling labor shortage’ ...“We’re not bleeding any longer — we’re hemorrhaging,”... decade long worker shortage exacerbated by the pandemic... In 2020, nearly a third of the workforce left... after less than a year ...“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)



# IS THERE A CRISIS?

CONTINUED...



“Rural residents are being hit hard by...“EMS Deserts,” areas with almost no ambulance coverage.”

“...ambulance response times doubled...” (8 min 2018 to 16 min 2020) (CT)

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“...attributed that to a combination of stress, pandemic-related burnout as well as poor wages and benefits.” (NYS)

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“NYSDOH Bureau of EMS...nearly 10% drop in EMT's from a decade ago.”

Last year, 15% of all available EMS personnel didn't renew their certification cards.”

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

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

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

# CONSIDER THE HISTORY OF EMS

**1865:** Birth of EMS.

**1868:** NYC's 1<sup>st</sup> 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 US Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare.  
i.e. "*Emergency!*" TV show at height of EMS movement...

**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:** Integral part of health care system.

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.
- Lack of new volunteers and EMT’s (high stress, made worse from pandemic, brought virus home)
- Hospitals backed up – must wait for bed.
- Wider coverage areas as EMS agencies close and less hospitals.



# WHAT IS NEEDED TO HELP EMS?

EMS must be defined as an ESSENTIAL SERVICE in NYS

Essential part of the health care delivery system.

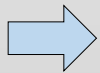
Provide early intervention health care.

Provide EQUAL access to EVERYONE, not just those that can afford EMS.

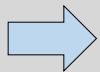
Treat employees as essential workers: Police, Fire & EMS. They are on the front line too.

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

As Employees

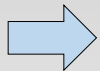


Better pay



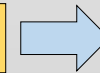
Better access  
to healthcare  
& benefits

Volunteers

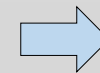


Recruitment & state/  
local tax breaks

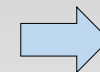
As Agency



Regional mutual aid policies &  
support for dispatching



Higher insurance reimbursement  
for non-transport services



Insurance payment direct to EMS,  
not patient to EMS.



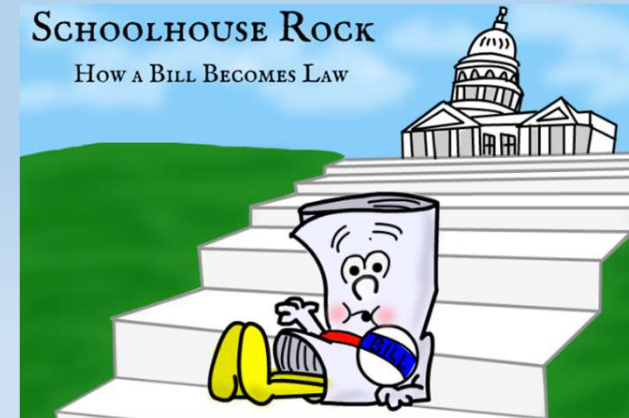
# WHAT CAN I DO?

- 1) Ask questions of local EMS. (*response times, mutual aid figures, turnover, etc.*)
- 2) Educate the public.
- 3) Inform 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?  
Focus on a recruitment and retention plan.
- 1) *County:* Mutual aid plans, training, communication.
- 2) *State:* Support nonpartisan legislation; state & regional plans; training.
- 3) *Federal/State:* Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement beyond transport;  
EMS- specific grant funding.

**Comprehensive Priority State Legislation has been proposed**



# CURRENT NYS LEGISLATION



## S4020/A3392 (Re-introduced in 2023 Legislative Session)

- Defines EMS as ESSENTIAL.  
Def.: Must be provided by municipalities in a reliable manner, available to everyone.
- NYS EMS Council and Regional EMS Councils to develop statewide and regional plans and standards.
- Provides access to NYSHIP/Empire Plan for NFP & Volunteer EMS agencies.
- 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. Provides access to NYS Retirement benefits for NFP & easier access to credits for Volunteers.
- Allows for the creation of EMS special districts as of right.
- Opportunity for EMS agencies to become accredited.

# 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](http://www.ryebrook.org/ems)

Chris Bradbury: [cbradbury@ryebrook.org](mailto:cbradbury@ryebrook.org)

Susan Spear: [SSpear@westchestergov.com](mailto:SSpear@westchestergov.com)

Mike Volk: [mkv1@westchestergov.com](mailto:mkv1@westchestergov.com)