

# Status of EMS in Broome County

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Public Safety & Emergency  
Services Committee

September 12, 2022



# Current Situation Broome County

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The demand for ambulance response in Broome County has, due to increasing frequency over the past few years, surpassed the supply of staffed (“on-duty”) ambulances. This imbalance between supply and demand can be attributed to multiple factors on both sides of the equation. This problem is not unique to Broome County, EMS shortages are occurring all over NY and across the nation.



# The Effects

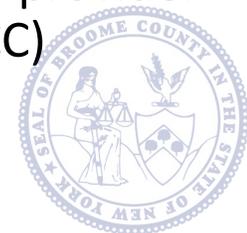
- Delays in ambulance response to emergency calls of all severity levels, including the most critical (calls must be “wait-listed” until ambulances free up from previous calls, responses can be delayed up to 2 hours).
- Excessive use of mutual aid, depriving other (often rural) areas of their own local EMS coverage





# Staff Shortages

- Continuation of long-term decline in volunteerism, very few ambulance companies are entirely volunteer
- Challenges in recruitment and retention of career EMS staff, especially as the nation's widespread labor shortage has led to better-paying alternatives
- Elimination by NYS of the second-highest level of EMS provider certification (EMT-CC)





# Revenue Limitations

Inhibit ambulance services from increasing pay and/or benefits to counter the foregoing challenges, make it difficult to meet other increasing costs, and create financial instability:

“Payor mix” of health insurance coverage in the community largely dictates rates of reimbursement. Medicaid, in particular, pays well-below the services’ actual costs.

Failure of many insurers to pay directly to the ambulance service leads to revenue loss.





# Regulations

- Article 30 of Public Health Law governs EMS
- EMS law went into effect in 1975



# Demand Factors

## Increasing Rates of Ambulance Utilization:

- Aging population, increasing rates of poverty, increasing violence and addiction, and lack of access by many to primary healthcare and more appropriate means of medical transport.
- Decentralization of healthcare has increased reliance on EMS for inter-facility transportation.



# What Action Broome is Taking

- Broome County has put together an EMS Workgroup (subcommittee of the EMS Advisory Board) to provide insight into unique challenges EMS is facing across the County.
- Broome County is consulting with our vendor Tetra Tech to provide an independent analysis of the problem and provide potential solutions.



# Questions



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