



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

For Immediate Release: May 29, 2024

Contact: Jonathan Heppner | heppner@nysenate.gov | 518-455-2415

Senate Majority to Pass Legislation Supporting Emergency Medical Service Providers & Enhancing Safety

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority will pass a comprehensive legislative package to equip New York’s emergency service providers with the resources they need to continue saving lives. This package includes critical measures such as providing Medicaid reimbursements to medical service agencies for point-of-response treatment without requiring further medical evaluations, expanding the ability of ambulances to administer life-saving blood transfusions, recognizing general ambulance services as essential, and offering financial relief to our state’s emergency medical service first responders.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “Emergency medical service providers are the backbone of our healthcare system in times of crisis. This legislative package ensures they have the support and resources necessary to continue their life-saving work. By addressing financial, operational, and systemic challenges, we are reaffirming our commitment to the health and safety of all New Yorkers.”

Chair of the Senate Health Committee, Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “Emergency medical service responders are often the first people who provide critical care at the scene of an accident. My bill would task the State Department of Health with charging ambulance service providers a fee to carry out an annual assessment of their revenue to consider increasing medical payment reimbursement rates for their services. This assessment will help ensure our ambulance service providers are being fairly compensated for their life-saving efforts.”

The legislation being passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Medicaid Reimbursement for Treatment in Place/Alternate Provider Transportation:** This bill, [S.8486B](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, would authorize Medicaid reimbursements to emergency medical service agencies for providing emergency medical care to Medicaid enrollees without requiring the transportation of these patients from the place where medical care was administered. In addition, it permits

Medicaid payments to be made to EMS services when they transport individuals to alternative care facilities instead of only hospitals.

- **Permitting More Ambulances to Administer Blood Transfusions:** This bill, [S.6226A](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, would permit more ambulance services and advanced life support first responders to store, administer and distribute blood. All ambulances, whether airborne or grounded, would qualify to transfuse blood products to patients to resuscitate them during transport.
- **Uniform Ambulance Service Assessment:** This bill, [S.5122](#), sponsored by Senator Gustavo Rivera, would allow the NYS DOH to charge ambulance service providers a universal service assessment fee to cover increased medical assistant payment rates for their services.
- **Increasing Volunteer Firefighter/Ambulance Worker Tax Credit:** This bill, [S.7286A](#), sponsored by Senator Monica Martinez, would increase the volunteer firefighters' and ambulance workers' personal income tax credit from \$200 to \$800 for eligible individuals, and from \$400 to \$1,600 for eligible married joint filers. This legislation allows for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers to claim both state income and local property tax credits.
- **Strengthening Support for EMS Services:** This bill, [S.4020C](#), sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, would declare general ambulance services as an essential service, establish special districts for the financing and operation of generation ambulance services, and provide for a statewide comprehensive emergency medical system plan.

Bill Sponsor Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “EMS is a pillar of our rural healthcare system, but our providers are in crisis due to challenges spanning inadequate reimbursement to onerous rules preventing them from delivering certain types of emergency care. This legislative package advances recommendations that have come from experts in the field, including two bills I sponsor. One ensures EMS reimbursement for on-scene treatment, telemedicine, and transporting patients to other healthcare settings. The other expands the ability of ambulances to administer life-saving blood transfusions. Both bills are vital to strengthening EMS across NYS, and I thank my colleagues for their support.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Monica Martinez said, “Volunteer fire and emergency medical provider agencies are nearing the point of needing life support due to ongoing recruitment and retention issues; however, an increase in the state income tax credit may deliver the much-needed help to resuscitate interest in joining throughout the state. While these volunteers do not serve for the incentives, the state’s income tax credit provides real assistance to those who give so freely of themselves for the protection of others. By raising the credit from \$200 to \$800 for individuals and from \$400 to \$1600 for joint filers, we offer a significant incentive that demonstrates our gratitude and attracts new members who share a passion for protecting their neighbors. We must not allow another year to pass without addressing this critical issue; there is still time to stabilize the situation, but we need to act, STAT.”

Bill Sponsor Senator Shelley Mayer said, “I am very proud that my bill S. 4020C is part of this important package that will prioritize EMS and support the providers. We rely on EMS

professionals in some of our worst moments and their presence can mean life or death. We must ensure that EMS providers have the resources, training, and support they need to do this critical lifesaving work. S. 4020C declares EMS to be an essential service that must be provided to all New Yorkers and is a start towards giving EMS providers the recognition and respect that they all deserve. Thank you to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues for your dedication to supporting EMS throughout New York State and thank you to the EMS community for your dedication to serving others.”

Timothy P. Egan, Chairperson of the United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN), Executive Director of Rockland Paramedic Services and CEO of Rockland Mobile Care said, “On behalf of our more than 30 members who provide vital ambulance services across New York State, we commend the Senate for passing the Rescue EMS package. Most notably, the TIP/TAD bill will support better patient care and save both hospital and EMS resources. This is a tremendous victory for ambulance service providers. Our members are grateful to be deemed providers of “essential services” so long as any associated new funding boosts existing providers to fill the gaps in EMS coverage. Additionally, we are happy to see the Medicaid Rate Reform bill pass after subsidizing the program for many years. This package of legislation will strengthen ambulance service providers and the overall healthcare of New Yorkers.”

NYSAC Executive Director Stephen Acquario said, “With local EMS systems struggling under the weight of increased costs, workforce shortages, and high demand for increasingly complex services, the legislation passed today in the State Senate is a monumental step forward in ensuring these services are available to our residents in their hour of need. By working closely with counties, EMS providers and professionals, and our partners in the legislature, were able to craft legislation that addresses the root causes of this crisis and provides counties with the authority and flexibility they need to fund this essential service. We applaud Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and the individual bill sponsors for their commitment to ensuring that every New Yorker has access to fast, reliable EMS.”

Edward Tase, Jr., President of the Firefighters Association of the State of New York said, “FASNY greatly appreciates the leadership the Senate has shown in the passage of these important measures supporting the delivery of EMS services across our state. The backbone of the volunteer fire and EMS services throughout New York are the dedicated men and women who train and respond to their neighbors' calls for help. This work is essential, and it is well past the time that it is treated accordingly. More specifically, in today's challenging economic times, an increase to the income tax credit for these dedicated volunteers would be an important addition to our recruitment and retention toolbox. FASNY appreciates the Senate’s continued leadership on passing this income tax credit increase year after year and urges this to be the year the Assembly does the same.”

NYSACHO Executive Director Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES said, “Our public health systems and communities count on EMS to be there when we need them, and they always are. But we must not take that for granted. Every facet of our public health system requires investment and support, including EMS. We are grateful to Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and the Senate for their leadership in supporting the ‘Rescue EMS’ package, and we urge the

Assembly and Governor to join the Senate and act now to ensure our EMS infrastructure has the resources it needs to save lives and keep our communities safe.”

NYSVARA Legislative Committee Chair Steven Kroll said, “The New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA) is pleased to endorse this package of Senate bills that support emergency medical services. We are grateful to the Senate sponsors and look forward to working with them to protect access to ambulance services in New York communities. We are the first health professionals that people see when they are ill or injured and there is an insufficient number of available EMTs and Paramedics to meet the needs of New York State communities. This crisis is a threat to public safety and health, and we thank the New York State Senate for their leadership on behalf of the thousands of selfless volunteer EMS responders that we represent. We are struggling to survive, and ambulance services must get paid for treatment provided when we don’t take a patient to the hospital and EMS must become an essential service.”

Alanna Badgley, Co-Founder EMS Sustainability Alliance, said, “For too long, our prehospital healthcare system has been struggling to the detriment of both EMS professionals and the patients we serve. Today, the Senate took a huge step forward in addressing these underlying issues. By passing this package of bills, they are laying the foundation for regrowth and building a more sustainable EMS system in New York. The EMS providers in this state are incredibly grateful to our leaders for taking these historic actions.”

###

Follow on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/NYSenDems>

New York State Senate | senatedemocraticmajority@nysenate.gov | 518-455-241