



Department of Health

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

JAMES V. McDONALD, MD, MPH
Commissioner

JOHANNE E. MORNE, MS
Executive Deputy Commissioner

January 23rd, 2026

Dear EMS Stakeholder:

The Department appreciates the proposals from the external and independent *Report on Rural Ambulance Services* and the work of The New York State Rural Ambulance Task Force. This report is the result of more than three years of Taskforce work to study the issue of the provision of services in EMS with a specific focus on how those services are provided in rural communities. The Department is thankful for the time and energy the Taskforce committed to its work and for completing the statutory requirement.

It is heartening that so many of the proposals from the report align with already announced accomplishments and priorities of the Hochul Administration and the Department of Health. Among the accomplishments of this administration have been:

- More than \$72 million dollars in improvements to Medicaid EMS rates;
- The enactment of compensation for care rendered without transportation to a hospital emergency room through the Treatment in Place initiative (TIP) as well as transportation to an alternate care destination (TAD);
- The allocation of more than \$90 million dollars in personnel and resources to State EMS to support rural EMS initiatives, agencies, and systems – including the rural Ambulance Taskforce and the State EMS Taskforce;
- Enacting changes to New York State statutes to establish community paramedicine demonstration program in the state; and
- Funding allocated for a statewide EMS recruitment and retention campaign in addition to a Mental Health and Wellbeing program.

Other proposals that also align with administration priorities include:

- Declaring EMS an essential service;
- The creation of special districts to provide EMS services;
- Providing state funding to subsidize the formation, and sustainability, of County EMS;
- Reinforcing a county role in coordinating EMS and providing a funding mechanism; and
- Providing efficient certificate of need action to establish county EMS service.

Rural EMS and the EMS system is important to the State Department of Health. The taskforce work will be an important additional piece in the broader view of the EMS system that has been informed by New York State Emergency Medical Services Council's EMS Sustainability Technical Advisory



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Group 2023 *Evidence Based EMS Agenda for Future* and work by the Public Health and Health Planning Committee's Planning Committee and the Healthcare Association of the State of New York regarding EMS and hospital integration. All of these separate but related collaborative opportunities will help in the process of formulating a cohesive, integrated plan for the development of a future state EMS model that meets the needs of the people of New York State.

We look forward to working to further advance the cause of EMS in rural communities and everywhere else in New York.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hennessey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Hennessey
Deputy Director
Office of Primary Care and
Health Systems Management