

PENINSULA AMBULANCE CORPS 2021 Report to the Towns

As this year began, we expected Peninsula Ambulance Corps' primary challenge was to continue the work begun in 2020, under the leadership of our Manager, Alan Henschke, to reorganize our business model to improve efficiency and to match our staffing model with call volume patterns.

That challenge became secondary as COVID-19 continued to be the primary challenge for us. The use of supplies to protect our Staff and our patients rose. In addition, many Staff members left our employment due to COVID. Some left due to having to work more hours at their full-time employers. Others chose not to be vaccinated and the state will not allow them to work. Furthermore, most EMS training programs have temporarily stopped or been reduced. This has led to a local, state, and national shortage of EMS providers. Our call volume is increasing, and we have fewer staff to cover the shifts. This has led to increased overtime and management covering open shifts.

Related to COVID, Peninsula Ambulance was selected as one of two Hancock County EMS services to provide COVID vaccinations. We provided 819 vaccinations (initial and booster) to area first responders and teachers. This was a significant undertaking that required training Staff and purchasing equipment. Peninsula Ambulance met the challenge and is now positioned to provide vaccination services in the future.

Our largest payors remain Medicare (federal government) and Medicaid/MaineCare (state government). Together, they represent 76% of our payors. However, for every \$1 of that billing, we are paid \$0.37 at best. This accounts for most of our operating deficit. If we include all payors, we still are only paid \$0.48 for every \$1 billed. This is a national issue and impacts rural services, such as ours, particularly hard. We continue to support state and national efforts to improve EMS reimbursement rates.

Unfortunately, the Community Paramedicine Program continues to be suspended. All funding sources have been diverted to COVID relief programs. Staffing shortages and continued high risks for visits also limit our ability to offer this program at this time. We continue to work with our partners, Healthy Peninsula, At Home and Northern Light Blue Hill Hospital, and hope to continue the Community Paramedicine Program in the future.

We are proud of our five full-time and 18 part-time and per-diem Staff—the Paramedics and EMTs who make the program work. They have been steadfast during these trying times. We continue to provide Staff with continuing education for federal and state mandated classes. Our employees like their jobs and provide real benefit to the communities we serve.

Our fleet of three ambulances allows us to maintain our staffing model of two on duty ambulances with a spare to use when the others need service. This also allows us to staff the third ambulance for local events, such as the Blue Hill Fair, and in times of increased call volume. We utilize management to staff the third ambulance during high-volume times, which allows us to respond to

more calls. In addition, we are expecting a new ambulance, to replace our oldest unit, in March of 2022. Providing a modern and reliable fleet of ambulances is essential for our operations.

Call volume—the basis upon which we are reimbursed—was 1534 this year, an increase of 245 calls from 2020.

Totals by town are given in the chart below. Inter-hospital patient transports, which were 40% of call volume, are also included in call totals.

2021 Calls by Town

Blue Hill	683	Penobscot	88
Brooklin	77	Sedgwick	98
Brooksville	55	Surry	206
Castine	84	Other Towns	243

We decrease our deficit in three ways: with the support of our town governments, by individual donations to our annual appeal, and by using volunteer board members to accomplish administrative and fund-raising tasks.

This year we are asking for \$20.00 for the operating budget (an increase of \$1.50) and \$4.43 (no increase) for the ambulance reserve fund per capita. This is a per capita total of \$24.43.

We need more Staff in a very difficult labor market. And we must keep the people that we have. We simply must pay our people what they are worth if we are to keep them. Potential new Staff must balance that remarkable dedication to an essential calling with feeding their family... paying for heat. The entire amount of this year's requested increase in support will go to wages

Staff and ambulances are the visible aspects of PAC, but community loyalty and the funds provided by the towns are its lifeblood. Our annual appeal to the public provides an essential and remarkably consistent source of support, but we must rely to the greatest extent on the common sense of town governments and citizens to understand the necessity for an ambulance service, and that, if we don't hang together and make it work, no one else will.

Thank you for your support.