

PENINSULA AMBULANCE CORPS 2022 Report to the Towns

As this year began, we expected Peninsula Ambulance Corps' challenges to continue to be recovering from COVID and 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.

As in 2021, our work in these areas became secondary. Inflation and staffing have become our greatest challenges. The cost of doing business has increased due to inflation. Fuel, medical supplies and almost everything we use to provide our services have increased in cost. We continued to see staff leave due to COVID and the economy. The primary reason is not being able to support their family with EMS wages. 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. Despite these challenges, PAC continued to provide our services and adjust our practices to compensate for the increased cost of doing business. In addition, we continue to improve employee wages to remain competitive.

Our largest payors remain Medicare (federal government) and Medicaid/ MaineCare (state government). Together, they represent 63% 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 eight full-time and thirteen 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. We have had a reduction of two employees from 2021. EMS staffing is an issue state and nationwide. We continue to explore recruitment and retention solutions.

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 replaced one of our ambulances in 2022. The new 2022 model replaced a 2010 ambulance. This is part of our fleet replacement

program and ensures we are providing a modern and reliable fleet to our communities.

Call volume—the basis upon which we are reimbursed—was 1644 this year, an increase of 110 calls from 2020.

Totals by town are given in the chart below. Inter-hospital patient transports, which were 31.4% of call volume, are also included in call totals.

2022 Calls by Town

Blue Hill	771	Penobscot	86
Brooklin	65	Sedgwick	123
Brooksville	80	Surry	150
Castine	71	Other Towns	298

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 \$21.50 for the operating budget (an increase of \$1.50) and \$5.00 (An increase of \$0.57) for the ambulance reserve fund per capita. This is a per capita total of \$26.50.

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.