

## **PENINSULA AMBULANCE CORPS 2023 Report to the Towns**

We began 2023 with the hope that the effects of the COVID pandemic would fade and under the leadership of our Manager, Alan Henschke, we would continue to reorganize our business model to improve efficiency and to match our staffing model with call volume patterns.

COVID continues to place a strain on the service. Continued outbreaks, increased use of personal protection supplies, and staff illness all created strains on our operations. Inflation and staffing continue to be 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. Our call volume is increasing, and we have not been able to increase staff sufficiently to cover the shifts. This has led to continued overtime and to management having to cover open shifts. Despite these challenges, PAC continued to provide 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 37% of our payors. However, for every \$1 of that billing, we are paid \$0.38 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.

We are proud of our nine full-time and twelve 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 added one full time EMT in 2023 and maintained the same number of employees as 2022. This has reduced overtime; but we still need more Paramedics and EMT's on our staff. EMS staffing is an issue in the 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.

Totals by town are given in the chart below. Inter-hospital patient transports, which were 35.8% of call volume, are also included in call totals.

### **2023 Calls by Town**

Blue Hill	775	Penobscot	79
Brooklin	72	Sedgwick	106
Brooksville	70	Surry	183
Castine	81	Other	238

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 \$23.50 for the operating budget (an increase of \$2.00) and \$5.50 (An increase of \$0.50) for the ambulance reserve fund per capita. This is a per capita total of \$29.00.

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. This year's requested increase will help go to increase 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.