

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee

Report for January 2019

The EMS Advisory Committee was formed under authority in Act 155 of 2012 and revised in Act 202 of 2018. The committee was tasked with making recommendations on ten specific issues and reporting back to the legislature on the status of the EMS system. The Committee makeup was changed in 2018 and additional information was requested. New committee members met four times, focusing discussion on questions 3,4 and 10 due to the short time frame to deliver this report. Data was gathered from direct questions to service providers from across the state representing all sizes and types of service.

The committee feels that it is important for legislators to understand the significance of our statewide EMS system. As part of the state's emergency response system and a critical part of our health care system EMS responders answered more than 97,000 calls for service last year, a 6% increase over the previous year. As part of the health care system, EMS professionals provide access to critical services and provide life saving procedures and provide medical transportation to a growing number of Vermonters.

Question 1: Whether every Vermont municipality should be required to have in effect an emergency medical services plan providing for timely and competent emergency responses.

EMSAC recommendation: This question WAS NOT reviewed by the committee this year. We intend to revisit this over the next year. Most recently, in 2015 the report states "the Committee recommends that no Vermont municipality be required to have in effect an emergency medical services plan providing for timely and competent emergency responses "

Question 2: Whether the state should establish directives addressing when an agency can respond to a nonemergency request for transportation of a patient if doing so will leave the service area unattended or unable to respond to an emergency call in a timely fashion.

EMSAC recommendation: This question WAS NOT reviewed by the committee this year. We intend to revisit this over the next year. Most recently in 2015 the report states "The EMS Advisory Committee unanimously agrees that current statute and rule are sufficient and do not require expansion."

Question 3: How the EMS system is functioning statewide and the current state of recruitment and workforce development.

EMAC conclusion: This question was discussed at length. We solicited information from service providers to evaluate trends. Workforce development is difficult with 79% of services reporting not having adequate staff and 17%of services reported needing mutual aid for primary calls more than 10% of the time.

Question 4: Each EMS district's response times to 911 emergencies in the previous year, based on information collected from the Vermont Department of Health's Division of Emergency Medical Services.

Insert Chart

EMSAC Discussion: The committee reviewed the data for the previous three state fiscal years. Considerations were made for data quality with some data being excluded. The committee identified average response notification to response times ranging from 2 minutes to 9 minutes depending on the EMS district.

Question 5: Funding mechanisms and funding gaps for EMS personnel and providers across the State, including the funding for infrastructure, equipment, and operations and costs associated with initial and continuing training, licensure and credentialing of personnel.

EMSAC Discussion: While the committee did not have time to review all aspects of this question, funding was identified as a common difficulty. It was noted that Medicaid reimbursements for ambulance transports do not get annual increases to keep up with increasing costs.

Question 6: The nature and cost of dispatch services for EMS providers through out the State and suggestions for improvement.

EMSAC Discussion: Dispatching was not specifically discussed due to time constraints.

Question 7: Legal, financial, or other limitations on the ability of EMS personnel with various levels of training and licensure to engage in lifesaving or health preserving procedures.

EMSAC Discussion:

Question 8: How the current system of preparing and licensing EMS personnel could be improved, including the role of Vermont Technical College's EMS program: whether the State should create an EMS academy: and how such an EMS academy should be structured.

EMSAC Discussion: The committee reviewed enrollment information available from service providers. State EMS education data was not available. Services reported difficulty with access to EMS education with 53% reporting difficulty with access to written testing, 56% with difficulty to practical testing.

Question 9: How EMS instructor training and licensing could be improved

EMSAC Discussion:

Question 10: The impact of the States credentialing requirements for EMS personnel on EMS providers.

EMSAC discussion: The committee evaluated this question through a survey of service providers. 50% of providers reported a burden caused by the credentialing requirements with 30% reporting a loss of providers as a direct result. Services reported an average labor cost of \$3300, Administrative Cost of \$1250 with volunteer services investing an average of 175 hours.

Conclusion / recommendation:

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