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Michigan EMS leaders celebrate first responders, call for state reimbursement of unpaid emergency services during EMS Recognition Week

*EMS providers still owed nearly \$6 million for emergency services
provided to state prisons*

Lansing, Michigan – During EMS Recognition Week in Michigan, EMS leaders have a message for state lawmakers: honor us by compensating our agencies for unpaid emergency services provided to state prisons, before it further impacts operations around the state.

EMS agencies around the state remain on the hook for nearly \$6 million in emergency services provided at Michigan Department of Corrections' (MDOC) prisons through its former healthcare provider Wellpath. This lack of payment has left EMS providers who cover nearly 60% of the state's population with serious financial woes. Most dire is the situation in the Eastern Upper Peninsula, where delinquent payments of nearly \$500,000 owed to Kinross EMS has left the agency with less than 10 days of operating expenses.

"While EMS Week is a great time to honor the thousands of first responders who are there for Michigan residents every day, the best way to truly honor them is to make sure they are paid for their work," said John Clayton, President of the Michigan Association of Ambulance Services and System Director at MyMichigan EMS in Midland. "We urge state leaders to take the opportunity during EMS Week to right this wrong before communities are left without care."

EMS providers continue urging legislators to pass House Bill 4249, a bipartisan supplemental budget bill, to reimburse agencies for their lifesaving state-mandated work to Michigan prisons. The lack of compensation continues to strain emergency response agencies, putting emergency care in jeopardy while leaving Michiganders vulnerable when they need help most. As EMS agencies are required under Michigan law to respond to all 9-1-1 requests, the State of Michigan must compensate EMS agencies for the outstanding MDOC bills.

“EMS providers are always there when people need them and while EMS Week recognition is appreciated, stepping up and supporting our industry is a much more meaningful way to show gratitude for our work,” said Tony Sorensen, president of the Michigan Association of Emergency Medical Technicians.

About MAAS

The Michigan Association of Ambulance Services is a statewide trade association representing and advocating for ambulance services. MAAS members serve 80 percent of Michigan counties and were responsible for 870,000 or 72 percent of ambulance transports in 2023. MAAS members also provide community paramedicine, ER diversion and 9-1-1 services in several areas of Michigan. For more information, visit www.miambulance.org.

About MAEMT

The Michigan Association of Emergency Medical Technicians supports Michigan’s EMS professionals through strong advocacy, quality education, and opportunities for professional growth. They are committed to helping providers deliver excellent patient care and build lasting careers in EMS. For more information, visit www.miemt.org.

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