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EMS providers still owed millions, urge immediate reimbursement before emergency care is compromised

Lansing, Michigan – EMS providers are pleading with Michigan legislators to compensate them for unpaid emergency services provided to state prisons, before it impacts emergency operations around the state.

EMS agencies remain on the hook for nearly \$6 million in emergency services provided at Michigan Department of Corrections' prisons through its former healthcare provider Wellpath. This lack of payment has caused at least 15 providers across the state to deal 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 put the agency less than a month from closing its doors.

“The Legislature must prioritize the health and safety of our communities by compensating EMS agencies for the \$6 million in emergency care provided on behalf of the State of Michigan,” said Angela Madden, Michigan Association of Ambulance Services Executive Director. “This is a health and safety issue, not a partisan issue and we need urgent action before EMS providers are forced to close their doors and leave communities without emergency care.”

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. To date, action has not been taken to rectify this crisis and the nearly \$6 million deficit is taking its toll on EMS agencies, impacting lifesaving operations without reimbursement.

EMS providers are pleading with state officials to include direct reimbursement for affected agencies at the first available opportunity in a state budget supplemental

“Compensating EMS for keeping our communities safe and healthy 24/7/365 must be a priority and we urge the lawmakers to step up and do the right thing,” said Jeff White, chief of Richmond Lenox EMS, serving portions of Macomb and St. Clair Counties. “EMS providers are always there when people need them most and now it’s time for the State of Michigan to step up before life-saving services are impacted.”

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