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Michigan EMS leaders honor first responders, call for state support to end staffing crisis during EMS Recognition Week

*Nearly \$60M funding plan would resolve staffing crisis, improve EMS
licensing and recruitment*

Lansing, Michigan – It's EMS Recognition Week in Michigan and EMS leaders have a message for state lawmakers: The best way to honor us is providing support to end the staffing crisis.

"The EMS staffing crisis is worsening every day and there's unfortunately no end in sight," said Jason MacDonald, Michigan Association of Ambulance Services President and Vice President at MedStar Ambulance Services. "While Michigan's EMS Heroes greatly appreciate the recognition provided during EMS Week, the best way to truly recognize our hard work is to help end this staffing crisis."

MAAS along with the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs (MAFC), the Michigan Association of EMTs (MAEMT) and the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union (MPFFU) have come together and developed a plan to mitigate the staffing crisis with the help of state funding. The plan includes:

- \$50 million for recruitment, retention and training programming for ambulance operations of EMS education program sponsors. This could include cash recruitment and retention bonuses, student loan payment assistance, tuition assistance, equipment, books, fees, uniforms and dues associated with state or national membership accreditation.
- \$5 million for the state to create a marketing program to promote careers in emergency medical services.
- \$2.5 million to simplify the EMS licensing process by establishing a state-based initial paramedic satellite education program and a Michigan-only licensing exam.

"Working in EMS is a tough job in any era, but the pandemic has really been hard on those in emergency medical services," said Matt Sahr, president of the Michigan Professional Firefighters Union. "Our funding plan is focused on improving recruitment,

retention and training so all Michigan EMS providers have enough staff to serve our communities and respond quickly to emergency situations.”

The funding would help EMS services find, hire and train Michigan residents for critical roles as paramedics and EMTs. Michigan has 13 private paramedic training programs that are ready and able to train new paramedics, and others that would start programs if funding were available.

“The EMS staffing crisis is taking its toll all across Michigan and we need support to help alleviate it,” said MAFC President Jeff Roberts. “All EMS heroes want to do is serve their communities and extra support will ensure we can do that at the highest level possible.”

An EMT training program can be completed in nine weeks, while a paramedic training program takes 72 weeks to complete. An EMT training program for 20 students costs approximately \$147,000, including covering the cost of tuition/salary for students. A paramedic training program for 20 students costs approximately \$460,000, also covering tuition/salary costs.

“Getting more paramedics and EMTs into the field will reduce burnout and excessive overtime shifts current medics are dealing with,” said Andy Brown, president of MAEMT. “Our proposed plan would be a game-changer for the future of EMS and the safety of our communities.”

After decades of underfunding, state leaders did invest \$12.9 million for EMS services in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. That funding will be used to increase reimbursement rates so that EMS providers can increase pay and retain current EMS heroes.

About MAAS

The Michigan Association of Ambulance Services is a statewide trade association representing and advocating for ambulance services. MAAS members serve 70 percent of Michigan counties and were responsible for more than 800,000 or 68 percent of ambulance transports in 2021. 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 MPFFU

Strength through united action is trademark of trade union organizations. The mission of the Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union is to be an advocate in Michigan Capitol for Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services as a whole by sponsoring, promoting and protecting all forms of legislation that advances the interests and welfare of our members. We will do this together with strong and continual support of our affiliates across the state. For more information visit, <https://www.mpffu.org>.

About MAEMT

The Michigan Association of Emergency Medical Technicians promotes the professionalism of Michigan’s EMTs and paramedics through public and professional

education, support of research that is pre-hospital specific, and participation in Michigan's legislative process. For more information, visit www.miemt.org.

About MAFC

The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs established in the early 50's to assist its members in their efforts to promote effective fire prevention and suppression, emergency medical services and other emergency services through education, technical and legislative means. For more information visit www.michiefs.org/MAFC.

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