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Michigan EMS: State support needed to end severe first responder staffing crisis

\$20 million would cover the cost to recruit and train 1,000 critically needed EMTs and paramedics

Lansing, Michigan – With the staffing crisis in EMS getting worse every day, Michigan ambulance providers today are asking state leaders to allocate funding to recruit and train new critically needed first responders.

“In the midst of the staffing crisis EMS agencies across Michigan are facing, there are very few new paramedics and EMTs getting into this field,” said Jason MacDonald, MAAS President and Vice President at MedStar Ambulance Services. “Michigan EMS agencies have a plan to reverse this dangerous trend, we just need funding assistance from the state to make it happen.”

The Michigan Association of Ambulance Services (MAAS), the Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs (MAFC), and the Michigan EMS Practitioners Association (MIEMSPA) today called on Governor Whitmer and the Michigan Legislature to provide at least \$20 million dollars to cover the costs of recruiting and training at least 1,000 new paramedics and emergency medical technicians that are critically needed across the state.

The funding would help EMS agencies 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.

“We need more paramedics and EMTs in the field as quickly as possible to keep providing emergency response across the state,” said MAFC President Jeff Roberts, Chief of the City of Wixom Fire Department. “This funding ask would help us quickly get new recruits into the field so that we can begin to put an end to this staffing crisis.”

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. A \$20 million allocation from the state would ensure that 1,000 critically needed EMTs and paramedics could be trained and working in the field within two years.

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 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.

About MIEMPSA

The Michigan EMS Practitioners Association 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.miemspa.org.

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