

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
EMS POLICY BRIEF NEW YORK CITY

WORKING DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

The Emergency Medical Services Political Action Committee (EMSPAC)-501(c)4 mobilizes NYC EMS to engage in political action around legislative issues that affect their workforce. There are 15,500 EMTs and Paramedics living, working, and voting in the five boroughs of New York City. We ask your office to review this short brief and schedule a time for your EMS constituents to address these issues with your office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES.....3
PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.....4
STATEMENT OF FACTS.....5
STAKEHOLDERS.....7

POLICY ARGUMENT.....8

I. [**MENTAL HEALTH**: THERE MUST BE A REASONABLE MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT
IN THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE EMS IN ALL SECTORS]8

II. [**WORKPLACE SAFETY**: THERE ARE NUMEROUS DANGERS AND SAFETY
CONCERNS AFFECTING NYC EMS].....9

III. [**WELLNESS**: WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR THE ONGOING WELL-BEING OF EMS
PROFESSIONALS].....10

CONCLUSION.....10
ADDENDUM ON EMS DEATHS.....11

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

[Work-Related Deaths Among New York City Ambulance Services Personnel: 1893-2022 \(jems.com\)](#)

[Is EMS Still the Most Dangerous Profession? - JEMS: EMS, Emergency Medical Services - Training, Paramedic, EMT News](#)

[Reviving EMS | CBCNY](#)

[Mt Sinai EMT Stabbed in Ambulance on 7/19/23](#)

[NYC EMT repeatedly stabbed by 'emotionally disturbed' patient in back of ambulance: 'He skewered her' \(msn.com\)](#)

[EMT released from hospital after being shot in ambulance by drunk patient on Staten Island - ABC7 New York \(abc7ny.com\)](#)

[Why are NYC's EMS workers paid less than other first responders? - City & State New York \(cityandstateny.com\)](#)

[NYC council wants more pay for EMS, but FDNY's hands are tied \(nydailynews.com\)](#)

[Report on the agency xx fiscal 2023 preliminary plan and the fiscal 2022 mayor's management report \(nyc.gov\)](#)

[FDNY-Budget-Note.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)

[Rescue EMS from the FDNY: Reverse the merger from a quarter-century ago \(nydailynews.com\)](#)

[Queens councilwoman calls for EMS pay parity, slams Hochul for 'unconscionable veto' – QNS.com](#)

[NYC Council Backs EMS Pay Parity - JEMS: EMS, Emergency Medical Services - Training, Paramedic, EMT News](#)

[COVID-19 fatalities among EMS clinicians \(ems1.com\)](#)

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

There are deep structural problems with the provision of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in New York City. This is deeply rooted in the division of emergency services into 5 sectors with as many as 70 separate agencies providing ambulance services.

The subject of this policy brief is the mental health, safety, and general wellness of the **15,500 NYC EMS** that manage over **1.6 million** emergency calls per year.

We approach your office seeking to bring attention to a serious matter that concerns an essential service in the City of New York. Decades of mismanagement have placed the world's busiest ambulance service under the control of a fire department that does not seek **modernization, professionalization, or unification.**

As a result, the FDNY EMS cannot manage over **66%** of the 911 call volume. It cannot retain skilled personnel as **70%** of the workforce resigns after or before 5 years. Importantly based on such prolonged attrition, the FDNY EMS has fractured the 911 system amid hospital-based units, private commercial units, volunteers, and poorly paid, poorly disciplined municipal service, third-class first responders within the FDNY where several hundred of the most physically fit “promote to fire” for higher wages and better conditions.

A rising number of assaults on EMS professionals, a steady wave of EMS suicides, and a total failure to protect the men and women protecting New York City are the focus of this brief.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

- I. **The field of EMS is physically dangerous and mentally degenerative. As a result, most (70%) of FDNY EMS EMTs resign from their employment in under 4 years.**
- II. Approximately **15,500** New Yorkers are employed in this industry which can be divided into five distinct; **FDNY MUNICIPAL, HOSPITAL BASED VOLUNTARIES, PRIVATE SECTOR, PRIVATE SECTOR UNCONVENTIONAL**, and 42 volunteer agencies the largest one **Hatzalah** as over 2,500 EMS providers.
- III. The sector distribution of operational EMS workers is approximately 4,100 in the FDNY EMS represented by **Local 2507**.
- IV. Approx. 500 FDNY EMS Lieutenants and Captains are represented by **Local 3621**.
- V. Approx. 2,000 Hospital-based EMS; around 1,200 represented by **SEIU1199**, and approx. 6,000 largely non-911 EMS in the private sector although these personnel are being contracted out to a wide range of hospitals including St. Barnabas, Montefiore, Bronxcare, Mt. Sinai Beth Israel, Brooklyn Hospital, Interfaith, and Kingsbrook Jewish.
- VI. There are **42** volunteer EMS agencies, the largest being Hatzalah with over 2,500 EMS. The majority of these VACs are inoperable and not staffing daily units.
- VII. The estimated salary range of an EMT is **\$18.00-24.00**, these units are called BASIC LIFE SUPPORT (BLS). The majority of City ambulances are BLS.
- VIII. The estimated salary range of a Paramedic is **\$30.00-\$45.00**, these units are called **ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT**. These units perform above the level of RN in the field doing intravenous medication administration, endotracheal intubation, as well as cardiopulmonary resuscitation with electrotherapy.
- IX. There are staffing shortages for both types of EMS workers particularly in the FDNY EMS divisions, where low wages and high attrition rates cause 70% of the ambulance service to resign before their 4th year on the job.
- X. There are over **5,000 911 EMS calls a day** divided into 7 response segments.
- XI. Several thousand more calls of lesser acuity are managed outside the 911 system by private EMS units and volunteers.
- XII. The system inefficiently utilizes a combination of municipal, hospital-based, and private-sector units under the command and control of the FDNY. This system is the result of the deliberate defunding of Municipal EMS in the years since the 1996 merger of the HHC Ambulance Service with the FDNY.
- XIII. **1.6 million calls per year** managed by municipal, private, and hospital-based EMS units under the dispatch command and control of the FDNY.
- XIV. The Municipal FDNY-based service responds to $\frac{2}{3}$ the 911 call volume with the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ being handled by hospital-based units.
- XV. The 911 system of the City of New York is supported by four sectors of EMS providers; $\frac{2}{3}$ of the approx. 5000+ daily calls are handled by FDNY EMS.

- XVI. At the root of this are long hours worked, constant exposure to death and dying, as well as high-stress intervals where there is front-line exposure to critical trauma and medical events.
- XVII. There have been over **500 documented assaults** on EMS in 2022. The number unreported is easily double that.
- XVIII. These instances of assault and battery on EMS members take many forms and contexts; verbal threats, physical attacks, spitting, biting, and kicking, and numerous cases have resulted in long-term disability and permanent disfiguration.
- XIX. **Since 2020 more than 128 EMS workers have died**, mostly while off duty from cumulative stress and illness.
- XX. Notable among these incidents are the line-of-duty murder of EMT **Yadira Arroyo**, the on-duty shooting of an RUMC EMT **Rich McMahon**, the stabbing murder death of FDNY Lt. **Alison Russo**, as well as Mt. SINAI EMS **Julia Fatum** who was stabbed 6 times in August of 2023.
- XXI. **There are at least 4 assaults on EMS workers daily** largely concentrated in Manhattan (Divisions 1 & 6) and the Bronx (Divisions 2 & 7).
- XXII. The majority of documented suicides are in the FDNY EMS.
- XXIII. There is on average 1 suicide, drug overdose, or attempted suicide **per month**.
- XXIV. In the period of 2022-2023, **there have been at least 10 EMS suicides**.
- XXV. There is no universal safety net, critical incident stress management system, hotline, or unified efforts to promote EMS wellness and prevent self-harm.

STAKEHOLDERS

MUNICIPAL EMS UNIONS

1. **Local 2507** (4,100 FDNY EMTs and Paramedics)
2. **Local 3621** (500 FDNY EMS Lts and Cpts)
3. **FDNY EMS Superior Officers Association** (40 FDNY EMS Chiefs/ Deputy Chiefs)

HOSPITAL-BASED UNIONS

4. **1199 SEIU Technical Professional Division** (1,200 Hospital EMTs and Paramedics)

CHARITABLE BODIES

5. **EMS FDNY HELP FUND 501(c)3** (FDNY EMS only)
6. **REMSCO PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM** (All EMS Sectors)
7. **EMSPAC 501(c)3** (All EMS Sectors)

VOLUNTEER BODIES

8. **NYSVARA**(40 VACs/ all except Hatzalah)
9. **United Hatzalah**(2,500 Hatzalah EMS Volutneers in 11 Divisions/ 6 entities)

This proposal necessitates the formation of an EMS General Coordinating Committee (GCC) body to manage and distribute the funding for Mental Health, Safety, and Wellness measures to all sectors based on numbers and needs.

1. The GCC would become a standing Committee of NYC REMSCO.
2. The initial confidence-building mechanism of the EMS GCC would be data sharing around hardships, crashes, and assaults.
3. The secondary task would be an annual dispersal of grant money. Municipal funding specifically into EMS Hardship Help services.
4. The EMS GCC will appoint one reporter per stakeholder group to approximate the number of data points agreed to aggregate per sector.
5. The GCC would have one rep per stakeholder group and an executive of 1 per sector: MUNICIPAL (FDNY), HOSPITAL (1199), PRIVATE, and VOLUNTEERS.
6. The GCC would be granted funding in proportion to the number of EMS members per sector.

POLICY ARGUMENT

I. EMS Mental Health Legislation

The field of EMS is both physically and mentally demanding. Long hours, and constant exposure to death, dying, and human suffering take a largely ignored physical and mental toll on the mind and body of the EMS provider. This manifests as weight gain, depression, insomnia, alcohol/ substance abuse, risk-taking behavior, and difficulty in maintaining civilian relationships.

The segmentation of EMS response into numerous different agencies and sectors all but ensures **a total lack of uniformity** in response and more importantly a lack of uniform support for EMS providers seeking help.

The EMS as a service requires a broad-based support system to be established for all EMS workers no matter what their sector.

There is currently **no unified critical incident stress debriefing system.**

REMSCO PEER SUPPORT is completely underfunded and FDNY CSU is stigmatized and geared toward the firefighters. There are no EMS-specific support groups.

What we are asking funding for:

We are seeking City and State funding for a wide range of measures to support EMS Wellness, Health, and Safety.

We are seeking the following programs and policies to be framed as municipal law and budget allocations. These funds will come out of the budgets for FDNY, and HHC, and will be mandated spending programs for the hospitals and private agencies supplying 911 units to the system.

- **ALL-AGENCY/SECTOR EMS PEER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM** JOINTLY MANAGED BY REMSCO, FDNY, and HHC. THIS PROGRAM SHOULD ENABLE THE TRAINING AND PER DEIM HIRING OF SEVERAL HUNDRED EMS ADVOCATE/ PEER SUPPORT MENTORS TO ENSURE A MAXIMUM DIVERSITY OF TALENT AND AVAILABILITY.
- **A system of crisis debriefing and monthly support groups** for EMS members in all boroughs.
- **A well-staffed crisis line and drop-in center** in each borough.

The specific program costs are estimated to be:

INSERT LINE ITEM BUDGET

II. [WORKPLACE SAFETY LEGISLATION: MITIGATING DANGERS AFFECTING NYC EMS PROFESSIONALS]

EMS is a dangerous job with many well-documented risks to the body and mind of the EMS provider. These include but are not limited to:

- (1) Chronic Depression
- (2) PTSD
- (3) Alcoholism
- (4) Weight gain
- (5) Risk-taking behavior
- (6) Drug use
- (7) Sleep disorders
- (8) Loss of civilian friends
- (9) Divorce and domestic violence
- (10) Lowered life span to age to 55 year range

We are requesting support and funding for:

- Adequate and acceptable **de-escalation training**.
- **Individually issued, standardized PPE, helmets, and respiratory masks.**
- **Bulletproof vests are available to all 911 units on request.**
- Mandation of building in **EVOC/ CEVO training** to all EMS Academies as a standard for graduating EMTs.
- Mandation of **2 keys per unit**.
- Providing **ongoing martial arts training** to all active duty EMS.
- Providing **ongoing de-escalation training** to all active-duty EMS.
- End the usage of lights and sirens by private EMS for non-emergency transports.
- End the usage of private-sector EMS in the 911 system.

The specific program costs are estimated to be:
INSERT

III. [WELLNESS SUPPORT LEGISLATION: FUNDING THE ONGOING WELL-BEING OF OUR EMS PROFESSIONALS]

The most serious issue affecting NYC EMS in all sectors is cumulative stress, PTSD, and poor health resulting from long work hours and ongoing exposure to illness and trauma. Having an all agency Support system is a vital part of helping our members deal with this high-stress essential profession on the front line of supporting our fellow New Yorkers.

We are requesting support and funding for:

- Mandation of built-in Critical Incident Stress days to be activated after serious calls.
- Sponsorship of monthly EMS Debrief and Support drop-in groups in all boroughs.
- Uniform annual physical tracking for all EMS professionals
- Subsidized therapy as needed paid for by the employing agency
- Subsidized gym membership
- Mandatory out-of-service lunch breaks for all units

The specific program costs are estimated to be:
INSERT LINE ITEM BUDGET

CONCLUSION

We seek proper funding for support groups, hotlines, and psychological support for CISM. We are seeking adequate PPE, bulletproof vests, and standardization of all equipment in the 911 sector across all agencies. We seek EVOC, martial arts, and de-escalation built into all EMT training programs. We seek to end all private EMS companies using lights and sirens to expedite non-emergency calls. We are seeking an end to all private sector agencies in the 911 system.

**THE INITIAL PROJECTED EXPENDITURE FOR THESE POLICIES WILL BE
CALCULATED AND ATTACHED AS AN ADDENDUM.**

Version 1.0: November 1st
Public Version Nov. 1st

Addendum on EMS Deaths Since 2020

128 Known EMS deaths have occurred in the NYC area since 2020.

2023

Chief EMT **Arthur “Artie” DeMello**, Gerritsen Beach Fire Department
Lieutenant **Lawrence Anderson**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS Retired
Lieutenant **Joe Lynch**, FDNY EMS retired
Lieutenant **Glauco Ranier**, FDNY EMS Station 15.
Lieutenant **John Tagliatella**, FDNY EMS Retired
EMT **Rick Mendez**, NYC EMS
EMT **Susan Giovanniello**, Glen Cove VAC
EMT **Kerry Burnett**, FDNY EMS Station 47
FF/EMT **Romeo Batista**, Former FDNY EMS Station 45, FDNY FF Engine 226.
FF/EMT **Anthony Mauro**, FDNY 23
Paramedic **Jared Johnson**, Bronxcare/ Citywide Mobile Response
Paramedic **Arismendy Pichardo**, Bronxcare/ Citywide Mobile Response
EMT **Patricia Scaduto**, FDNY EMS Retired
Paramedic **James 'Jimmy' McFee**, Transcare Retired
EMT **Steve Lowenthal**, FDNY EMS retired
EMT **William Bender III**, FDNY/Suffolk County EMS
Paramedic **Paul Daniels**, FDNY EMS retired 9/11 related
Paramedic **Pete Bushey**, Retired FDNY EMS 9/11 related
EMT **William Haigney**, FDNY EMS retired

2022

Deputy Chief **Richard J. Chatterton**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS
Captain **Alison Russo-Elling**, Paramedic FDNY 49
Captain **Mike Early**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS
Captain **John "Jack" Boyle**, Paramedic FDNY EMS (retired)
Lieutenant **Joe Lynch**, Paramedic FDNY EMS (retired)

Lieutenant **Edwin Mendez**, FDNY EMS EMD
Lieutenant **Pablo Guzman**, FDNY EMS 9/11 related
Lieutenant **Adolph Lynch III**, FDNY EMS (retired)
Paramedic **John Travis Sr**, FDNY EMS
EMT **Wendell Alleyne**, FDNY EMS-EMD
Paramedic **Marvin Bethea**, Former St. John's Queens Hospital
Paramedic **Jeffery Joseph Burke**, FDNY EMS, Station 15
Paramedic **Alison Fry**, FDNY EMS
EMT **John Palladino**, FDNY EMS Station 19
EMT **Yelitza Torres**, FDNY EMS Station 10
EMT **Everett A. Jiang**, Central Park Medical Unit
Paramedic **Nicole Osario**, Assist, Hunter
EMT **Jessica Ulysse**, Ambulnz, Midwood, Instacare
EMT **Eddie Bullock**, Hunter, Montefiore, Bronxcare
EMT **Johnny Angel Espinoza**, Hunter Ambulance
EMT **Zhon Sherman**, Maimonides Medical Center
EMT **Mark Donnelly**, Maimonides Medical Center
EMT **Jose Ramirez**, Citywide Mobile Response
EMT **David Cepeda**, Flushing Hospital EMS
Firefighter **Jesse Gerhard**, EMT, FDNY EMS/Suppression
Paramedic **George Wheeler**, New York Presbyterian
RN Paramedic **Erin Moore**, NYU EMS
EMT **Michal Benny**, NYP/ Mt. Sinai
Paramedic **Joshua Brito** SCEMS/MSBI
EMT **David Gordon**, SeniorCare EMS
EMT **Aristan Garandeanu**, Ossining & Peekskill VAC
EMT **Terri Hawkins-Reyonds**, Bayshore Brightwater Rescue Dispatch
EMT **Bruce Gonzalez**, FDNY EMS Retired 9/11 related
Paramedic **Marco Rivera** FDNY/Transcare
Paramedic David S. Fenelon Transcare
EMT **Karl Borovivka**, HHC, MTA, WTC responder
EMT **Bob Dorries**, GOVAC
EMT **Joe Marcellino**, FLVAC
Paramedic **Lisa Sillin**, Ambulnz Newburgh
Paramedic **James Teehan Effe**, FDNY EMS retired
EMT **Steven Thorsen**, FDNY EMS, 9/11 related
EMT **Michael J Cahill**, FDNY EMS 9/11 related
EMT **Edwin Lugo**, FDNY EMS, Retired
EMT **Robert "Bobby" Hudson**, FDNY EMS

2021

Deputy Chief **Alvin Suriel**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS
Lieutenant **Gigi Gordon**, Paramedic FDNY EMS 9/11 related
Lieutenant **John P. Raftery**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS Station 49
Lieutenant **Danielle Connel**, Paramedic, FDNY Station 44
Lieutenant **Chuck Caple**, FDNY EMS retired
Lieutenant **Frank Curatola**, FDNY EMS
Lieutenant **Danielle Connell**, FDNY EMS Div 8
Paramedic **Henry Cancel** HHC EMS, Jamaica Hospital, founder of EMS Blacksheep
Paramedic **Bill McLaughlin**, FDNY EMS, DHS, Sgt Federal Protective Services
Paramedic **Craig Peterson** FDNY EMS (retired)
Paramedic **Andrew Mathew Cruz**, FDNY EMS
EMT **Sy Collins**, FDNY EMS Station 18 (Harlem, retired)
EMT **Brian Demarest**, Richmon University Medical Center
EMT **Steven Acevedo**, FDNY EMS Station 26
EMT **Vladimir Sabatelli**, FDNY EMS Station 55
EMT **James Michael Raimo**, FDNY EMS Station 54
Paramedic **Stephenson McCoy**, FDNY EMS (retired) 9/11 related
Paramedic **Rebecca Solomon**, Maimonides
Paramedic **Frank Montella** St Clare's
EMT **Emily Rose Storm**, Westchester EMS
FF/EMT **Vincent Malveaux**, FDNY EMS/Suppression
EMT **Erica M. Vilaca**, SeniorCare/ Mobile Medic EMS
EMT-CC **Nicolas Bo**, Manorville Community Ambulance
EMT-CC **Joey Zask**, Stony Point Ambulance Corps.
Paramedic **Eugene Thomas**, Central Park Medical Unit
EMT **Lofton Johnson**, FDNY EMS retired
EMT **BettyAnn Teehan**, FDNY EMS
EMT **Michele Nieves**, FDNY EMS

2020

Chief **Edward Gabriel**, FDNY EMS Retired
Captain **Thomas Schultz**, FDNY EMS Retired
Lieutenant **Matthew Keene**, Paramedic, FDNY EMS-Station 17
Lieutenant **Trudel Hiller**, FDNY EMS Retired
Lieutenant **Tommy Hannan**, FDNY EMS Retired
Lieutenant **David Stone**, FDNY EMS retired
Lieutenant **Richard Dunn**, FDNY EMS retired

EMT **John Mondello**, FDNY EMS-Station 18
EMT **Alex Raso**, FDNY EMS-Station 59
EMT **Idris Bey**, FDNY EMS, Bureau of Training
EMT **Gregory Hodge**, FDNY EMS, EMD
EMT **Douglas Gertz**, FDNY EMS, Station 7
EMT **Richard Seaberry**, FDNY EMS, Bureau of Training
EMT **Evelyn Ford**, FDNY EMS, EMD
EMT **John Redd**, FDNY EMS, EMD
EMT **Michael Lalima**, FDNY EMS, EMD
EMT **Emilio Navedo**, FDNY EMS, EMD
EMT **Brandon Dorsa**, FDNY EMS, Station 31
EMT **Tommy Akerberg**, FDNY EMS, Bureau of Training
EMT **Azzedin Ibn Mustafa Ahmed**, FDNY EMS, Station 55
EMT **Joanne Czarnecki** SeniorCare EMS
Paramedic **Christina Gardini**, Maimonides
Paramedic **Marlene Picone**, Maimonides
Paramedic **Joseph “Papa Joe” Braganza** NYU EMS
Paramedic **Anthony 'Tony' Thomas** (HHC/FDNY EMS), NYU Langone, Maimonides
Paramedic **Gary Lava** NYU, Hatzalah
EMT-PCC, RN **Brian Saddler**, Northwell
Paramedic **Paul Carr** Ambulnz
EMT **Julio Diaz** Citywide Mobile Response
EMT **Matthew Nicolas** Assist Ambulance
EMT **Warren Eisenstadt** Assist Ambulance
EMT **Mike Field** Valley Stream Fire Department
EMT **Salvatore Mancuso** Blooming Grove VAC
EMT **Margaret Parker**, FDNY EMS
Paramedic **Robert Gibbs**, FDNY EMS
EMT **Jim Geraci**, FDNY EMS
Paramedic **Faye Baughman**, FDNY EMS (retired)