

***Vermont Regional EMS Coordination Study
Executive Meeting Notes
Regional Stakeholder Meeting
Newport Ambulance, Newport, VT
October 24, 2023***

This meeting began at 6pm, with 20 stakeholders in attendance, and opened with remarks from Travis Howe, founder and CEO of Emergency Management Matters. A background of the Vermont Regional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coordination study was given by Mr. Howe, and it was explained that while there would be ample opportunity for open-floor comments, the focus would be on the following objectives, which are listed within the contract.

- Issues related to costs of service, cost effectiveness of various current service models, and cost-effective alternative service models.
- Existing funding models and identify long-term sustainable funding strategies.
- Challenges and opportunities related to local and regional emergency response coordination.
- EMS district structure, authority, duties, and the number of districts.

After examining a handout of key takeaways and themes from other meetings, the audience was asked for possible solutions. The following issues and concerns were highlighted by the stakeholders:

- Reimbursement rates were discussed and some wondered about whether or not there could be a future State fee placed on insurance providers to help pay for EMS.
- Education was widely discussed, and more specifically, the one-time funding related to programs and initial education. Many agreed that funding has been a great help but they worry it will not continue. Services present stated they need ongoing financial support for education due to increases in related costs. It was also noted that there may be a need for more support for students after they graduate classes and become licensed, in the form of better wages and opportunities.

- In terms of recruitment and retention, an idea surrounding VEFR courses in schools was brought up. This was followed by a discussion on how EMS in Vermont can begin to offer better career opportunities.
- Some stakeholders asked if it was possible to get the EMS workforce on State health insurance. Other ways of creating large group insurance purchases were discussed.
- Dispatch services were discussed, and the associated costs placed on EMS services were highlighted. With multiple dispatching entities in the District, coordination is difficult.
- Districts were discussed and some voiced the need for funding related to District Medical Advisors. It was also noted that if districts exist, there must be clarity, accountability, continuity, and common goals.
- Capital expenditures were discussed, with some services voicing concerns about their ability to replace expensive equipment. Stakeholders present asked if the State could help in some way.