

***Vermont Regional EMS Coordination Study
Executive Meeting Notes
Regional Stakeholder Meeting
Hartford FD, White River Jct.
October 27, 2023***

This meeting began at 6:30pm, with 15 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:

- A long discussion surrounding the mental health crisis and EMS' ability to handle calls from a resource and education perspective, dominated this meeting. Some stakeholders spoke to the having limited options in handling frequent users of the 911 system who do not belong in the emergency room setting. There is a need for more mental health and social services resources. Additionally, some stakeholders spoke to how law enforcement has been placed in a tough spot when it comes to helping with these calls for service.

- The benefits of the VEFR program were highlighted. IT has created better community preparedness but it has also been a good recruitment tool for some services. With little in the way of time and financial commitments, students can be exposed to EMS and decided if they want to get more involved. Additionally, some services are relying on VEFRs to complete crews, enabling more consistency in response. it was further noted that approximately 30% of those trained, later work to obtain EMR or EMT certification.
- Education funding was discussed and it was agreed that the State should provide long-term funding programs.
- Dr. Wolfson, the State EMS Medical Director spoke to how EMS services can call medical directors at hospitals to discuss whether or not a person should or should not be transported to an ER. If criteria is met, physicians can give the order to not bring subjects to the ER.
- A short conversation surrounding districts was held. It was noted that districts need clarity and continuity in terms of goals and objectives.