



BROOME COUNTY

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES STUDY

APRIL 2024

Broome County Office of Emergency Services
Public Safety Facility
153 Lt VanWinkle Drive, Binghamton, NY 13905



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This EMS Study is part of the County's effort to evaluate its existing EMS operations to make recommendations for long-term success, sustainability, improved efficiency, and increase safety for both EMS services and Broome County citizens. It compares the Broome County EMS system with both national and state trends and explores potential strategies and recommendations for enhancing the EMS system.

In October of 2019 the Broome County Office of Emergency Services (OES) published "The 'Level Zero' Crisis in Broome County" report which outlined the increasing frequency of no ambulances available for response. By September of 2022, in a post-COVID environment, the Broome County EMS Advisory Board and County Executive's Office recognized the need to restudy the unmanageable gaps in EMS coverage.

The County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System consists of 12 ambulance services (10 based within the County, and 2 are located in adjacent counties). All but one of these is equipped and authorized to provide advanced life support at least some of the time. In addition, there are 24 basic life support first response services (BLSFRs) and 1 advanced life support first response service (ALSFR). The system also includes three hospitals within the County (one of which is a Level II trauma center) and one Specialty Care Facility.

OES is responsible for EMS coordination within Broome County. OES provides education leading to certification and/or recertification of EMS providers and coordination of EMS response. In 2022, there were 41,042 calls for ambulance response in Broome County, and Broome County based ambulance agencies responded to an additional 1,299 calls in surrounding counties. The county was in a Low Resource Conditions 151 times that year.

Two stakeholder sessions were held with various representatives of the EMS agencies within Broome County during the course of this EMS Study. Additionally, multiple survey assessments were distributed and collected from various EMS stakeholders within Broome County.

Findings from this study provide an opportunity for county leaders to re-evaluate how EMS is delivered to their communities.

BROOME COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS:

198,675 County Population

705.77 square miles

7 Incorporated Villages

16 Towns

1 City

0.6166 Social Vulnerability Index which indicates a moderate to high level of vulnerability

EMS System

10 County Based Ambulances

2 Ambulance Services Bordering Broome County

3 Hospitals

1 Level II Trauma Center

1 Specialty Care Facility

EMS Call Data

41,042 EMS Response Calls in Broome County

1,299 EMS Response Calls in Surrounding Counties

Level Zero

151 Low Resource Conditions



Risks and Issues

During a medical emergency residents expect to call 911 and have an ambulance respond. This study will articulate that amongst the greatest risks is the ability for the Broome County EMS system to consistently respond, in a timely manner, to those calls for help.

Workforce Challenges

- The National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) conducted a groundbreaking survey of EMS agencies in the United States to gather information about the current state of EMS and the survey articulated applications for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) positions are down an average of 13% nationally.
- The demand for EMS services is expected to increase at a pace of about 5-10% per year.
- The number of New York State certified EMS personnel is insufficient to meet the needs of communities. Data provided by the NYS Department of Health shows that the number of certified EMS personnel declined from about 80,000 to about 70,000 between 2019 and 2021, a decrease of approximately 13%. Equally troubling, less than half of these 70,000 certified providers were working in EMS, as only 30,000 of them were named on a pre-hospital care report (PCR) during 2021.

Skyrocketing Expenses & Stagnate Revenues

- There has been an average 11% rise in wage expenses and a 12% increase in costs for equipment and supplies from 2019 – 2022.
- An average of 5% increase in fee-for-service revenue per transport.
- Cost increase by 10-15% while revenue is only increasing by 5%, EMS agencies require additional funding to sustain their current service delivery levels.

Findings and Recommendations

The following highlights the major areas of focus that Broome County can focus on to improve its EMS operations. Effective EMS systems are built on collaborations among the various organizations that make up the EMS system.

- Staffing – The number of available volunteer EMS providers will continue to trend downward, and the competition for career EMS providers will continue to lead to a tight labor market.
- Funding – As noted above, there is a startling disparity between expenses and available revenue for EMS.
- Operations - The evolving landscape of EMS demands a proactive approach to ensure the highest level of care and efficiency.
- Collaboration – It is crucial to establish a collaborative effort among agencies to enhance working conditions and offer incentives.
- Measurability – There is a need to establish Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for ongoing evaluation of EMS:
 - Response times, patient outcomes, and resource allocation.



Alternate Service Delivery Options

Broome County's current EMS system is community based private/non-profit agencies who are primarily user fee funded with some supplemental government funding.

1. The creation of one (1) county-wide EMS system operated by a single EMS provider funded and governed by a single governing body.
2. The creation of a regional EMS system operated independently:
 - a. Each system would be responsible for providing all funding needed to operate.
3. Keep the current operating system with the creation of a county-based EMS agency to support other agencies throughout the county by providing mutual aid support.
4. Hospital Based EMS that would operate by a contractual relationship between the local government and a hospital (or a local entity associated with a hospital).

A key option for Broome could be the creation of a county-based mutual aid support system to allow agencies currently operating in the county to continue with additional support.

Community Paramedicine

- Expanding the role of paramedicine in Broome County to include home visits, vaccinations, telehealth, and alternative transportation options could significantly reduce ambulance transports to emergency rooms and alleviate ambulance stacking at hospitals.

Emergency Department Off-Load Management

- Broome County to work with hospitals to allocate funding for an emergency department (ED) offload coordinator position during periods of high demand.
- Develop local training for Mobile Intensive Paramedic Program to support transfer of patients from local hospitals to higher levels of care.