

Wisconsin Office of Rural Health: Emergency medical service departments to gather at Capitol

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Madison, Wis. —Emergency medical services from across Wisconsin will gather at the Capitol to meet with their state legislators for the third annual EMS Advocacy Day this Wednesday, April 10. Personnel will share their stories about what it's like to be a paramedic or first responder, and will offer perspective on how the state's policies and budget help or hinder their ability to save lives every day.

EMS—short for Emergency Medical Services—exist as volunteer or paid services across the state. The majority of EMS and Fire personnel in Wisconsin are volunteers, particularly in rural areas. Emergency departments face a mix of financial and volunteer-related challenges, including difficulties recruiting and retaining volunteers, declining reimbursement rates, and limited financial support from communities.

EMS personnel will advocate for changes in four topic areas:

- Tax incentives to enhance recruitment and retainment of volunteers;
- Legislation or fiscal language that would allow communities to consolidate agencies into regionalized “districts” that are recognized as stand-alone entities;
- Modification of the budget to include a shared revenue increase, modification

- of levy limits, and allowance of user fees; and
- An increase in Medicaid reimbursement rates to support ambulance services.

Issue papers on these topics are [available online](#).

This event is organized by the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health (WI-ORH), and presented by the Wisconsin Emergency Medical Service Association (WEMSA), Professional Ambulance Association of Wisconsin (PAAW), Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association (WSFCA), and Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin (PFFW).