

For the past few years the number of volunteers have been declining. This decline in volunteerism within EMS and fire departments is a nationwide problem. Many EMS agencies are facing the same dilemma as Candor Emergency Squad (CEMS). The funding difference between an ambulance service and fire service is a fire service is state mandated that each town must provide funding via taxes. An EMS service is not state mandated so there isn't tax funding unless a contract or district is formed.

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION: Why after 57 years of operating independently does the Candor EMS now suddenly need over \$435,000 in taxpayer support per year?

ANSWER: Due to the lack of volunteers the Squad has had to hire EMT's and drivers. They need funds to pay for these employees. The squad has run for 57 years by volunteers making it possible to support their needs. This is no longer feasible.

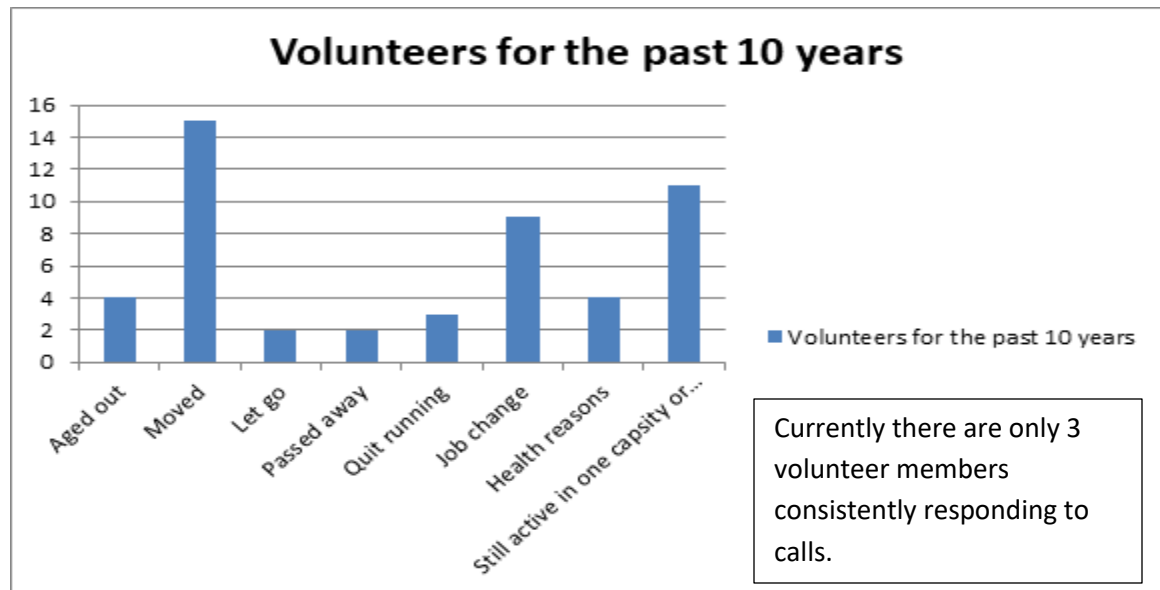
QUESTION: Why is there a shortage of volunteers?

ANSWER: Volunteer EMT's are few within our community and travel from outside the community to get to a call within 10 minutes is not possible. There have always been lulls in rostering over the past 5 or 6 years due to people moving away, aging out or they just burn out. We have seen a steady decline in recent years and the pandemic also had an effect. Some other reasons: Training is a long-term commitment with many hours committed to class and ride time. Every three years recertification is required for this recertification you have to complete many hours of continued medical education. There is a reduction in the availability of training, Tioga County hasn't offered EMT training for a few years and volunteers would have to travel out of the area to get this training. The basic EMT's now have more responsibility with more medications and heart monitor placement and transmissions. Calls typically take around 3 1/2 hours from start to finish with paperwork. Most volunteers have full time jobs, so when they are awake at night they lose sleep. The older members do not bounce back as easy as they did in their younger years with losing sleep. The risk of sickness and injury accompany lack of sleep. NYS Discovery Law, if CEMS is on a criminal scene they are required if asked to share evidence between the prosecution and defense including personal information such as address & personal phones.

QUESTION: Why is this suddenly now a problem?

ANSWER: This is not a new problem. This problem has been growing for a number of years. As volunteers diminished the members who were left continued to double or triple their times on duty or calls were dropped. Due to this the

Squad has begun to hire EMT's and drivers with funds previously allocated for new ambulances and equipment. Those funds are about to run out now as volunteerism has continued to decline and the need for paid staffing is continually needed.



QUESTION: Why does the Candor EMS Squad need \$435,000?

ANSWER: The Squad's goal is to pay for one team, per 12 hour shift (Minimum of an EMT and driver) 7 x 24 x 365. That means we need to hire the equivalent of nine full-time people. At the going rate for those skills, plus the associated taxes, and employee benefits that amounts to about \$435,000 for next year.

QUESTION What is the cost of an ambulance run for the Squad?

ANSWER: \$1,200 - \$1,600 average

QUESTION: Why does an ambulance transport cost so much?

ANSWER: Staffing time, advance level of care provided, liability and vehicle insurances, equipment, medications, supplies, general wear and tear on ambulances and fuel.

QUESTION: With the increase in property taxes will the Squad still bill insurance companies? If so, where is that money going?

ANSWER: The tax money the Squad is requesting is needed to pay for EMT's and drivers only. The Squad always has and always will bill insurance. That money will continue to be used to pay for the CEMS operation budget which

includes: equipment, ambulances, insurances, training and building maintenance just as it always has.

If we didn't bill the taxes would go up even higher to make up that loss. We would be asking for \$625,000 instead of \$435,000.

QUESTION: Can you explain a little about the billing?

ANSWER: We bill Medicare, NYS Medicaid and commercial insurances. Our fees are not reimbursed to us in full. We must accept the "allowable amount" per section 1835(l) and cannot collect any other amount other than the unmet deductible or copay. Most commercial insurances follow this structure also. NYS Medicaid reimbursement rates are set by NYS Department of Health. All insurances have unallowable amounts that cannot be billed to the patient.

QUESTION: Why not combine the EMS Squad with the Fire Department?

ANSWER: In accordance with New York State law fire departments are a municipality cannot bill for their services. Up until now billing customers' insurance companies for ambulance calls has been the primary source of revenue for the Squad. If the squad cannot bill they would need \$685,000 per year (i.e., \$250,000+\$435,000). The Candor Emergency Squad and the Candor Fire Department are two different entities. It is a State mandate that each town have a fire department that is funded by taxes. It is NOT a mandate for a town to have an ambulance service. Being a part of the fire department would not change the problem of having trained staff for the ambulance service.

QUESTION: Can't other nearby ambulance services provide support for Candor?

ANSWER: Yes and no - We have a Certificate of Need with the NYS Department of Health for the Town of Candor. Another agency cannot just come into the Town without a Certificate of Need. They can assist us, as we have a mutual aid contract within the county, but with mutual aid they would be coming from their own towns which would take a lot longer for them to get to the person in need. Sometimes those extra few minutes can make a big difference. Also, with other towns coming to assist us, it takes their agency away from their own areas of responsibility.

QUESTION: How many calls does the Candor EMS Squad make each year?

ANSWER: Average of a 5 year span 550 and 600

QUESTION: Of the 550 calls per year how many are "mutual aid" (i.e., the Candor Squad being called to help a neighboring community)?

ANSWER: Average 10 per year

QUESTION: Of the 100 dropped calls (i.e., calls made to Candor that had to be answered by a neighboring community) how many were dropped because Candor was providing mutual aid?

ANSWER: None

QUESTION: What does ALS (Advance Life Support) and BLS (Basic Life Support) mean?

ANSWER: ALS is Advanced Life Support/Paramedics. This is your medics who have furthered their education with a 2 year college degree. They can insert IVs in a few different ways, read a heart monitor and transmit an EKG to the hospitals, insert breathing tubes, give a vast amount of life saving medication, do advanced CPR and give more advance life saving measures. BLS is Basic Life Support. Is a 4 month state ran education certificate. This is the 2nd level of EMT education, they are able to take care of wound care, splinting and stabilizing, perform assessments, place heart monitor pads on patients and transmit the readings to the hospital, perform basic CPR and give some medications. Each level also have to do many hours of continuing medical education and recertify every 3 years.

QUESTION: What does the EMS Squad do besides answer emergency calls?

ANSWER: EMS covers events such as high school football games, motorcycle races, parades, Daffodil Festival, July 4th fireworks and assists the Candor Fire Department with their calls (whenever the fire department is called out, so is the squad). They have held community CPR training, Touch A Truck and taken an ambulance to the school for a recent COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

QUESTION: Why can't we just hire an outside business like Bangs?

ANSWER: The cost for a company like Bangs would way exceed the cost of funding us. Also when a company like Bangs comes in they don't do 24/7 contracts. They would be here for a certain time frame. If the unit that is supposed to cover Candor is needed in Tompkins County they would leave Candor and cover that call.

QUESTION: Will the squad still have the current Valu plan?

ANSWER: Moving forward the Valu plan we offered yearly will be changed to better accommodate a more effective billing service. Instead of a Valu plan a winter donation letter request will be sent as 25% of our operating budget is still donations.

QUESTION: What about volunteers is there still a need?

ANSWER: This agency was formed by volunteers and volunteers will always have an essential role in this agency and community. Our plan is to hopefully get some of our paid medics involved with the community to help grow our membership.

