



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Hinchey, Kelles, EMS, and Fire Coalition Urge Governor to Sign EMS Reimbursement Bill

MICHELLE HINCHEY September 6, 2024



Legislation Sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Anna Kelles will Create New Avenues for EMS Reimbursement, Strengthen EMS Operations and Rural Healthcare Statewide

Key EMS Bill Must be Signed into Law Before October 1, 2024, to Support EMS This Year

HUDSON, NY – Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Anna Kelles, backed by a wide coalition of EMS, fire, and municipal leaders, are urging Governor Kathy Hochul to sign their bill to expand Medicaid reimbursement for EMS providers. Under the current system, EMS can only be reimbursed when transporting patients to hospital ERs. The legislation sponsored by Hinchey and

Kelles (S.8486C / A.9012C) would allow reimbursement for on-scene treatment, transport to approved healthcare facilities, including urgent care or mental health clinics, and telemedicine consultations.

The bill unanimously passed the State Legislature in June and must be signed by September 30, 2024, to take effect this year. As a top priority in the [Rescue EMS Legislative Package](#), the bill has strong support from EMS, fire, and county leaders, many of which joined Hinchey and Kelles at Greenport Rescue Squad in Hudson on Friday, including representatives from the United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN), NYS Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA), Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY), NYS Association of Fire Districts, and members of Valatie Rescue Squad, Chatham Rescue Squad, Catskill Ambulance, Hunter EMS, Greenville EMS, and Cairo-Durham EMS. Other bill supporters include the NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC), the New York State County Executives Association, the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs, the New York State Association of County Health Officials, EMS Sustainability Alliance, and the International Association of EMTs & Paramedics.

“Our TIP/TAD bill is critical for keeping emergency medical services available in the State of New York, especially in rural and medically underserved communities where EMS is the frontline of healthcare,” said **Senator Michelle Hinchey**. “The demand for EMS is rising, but many providers statewide are facing detrimental challenges, and among them is inadequate reimbursement that’s threatening their ability to stay open and provide people the care they need when they need it. Our bill will help by ensuring EMS are finally paid for providing care they’re not currently reimbursed for, like treating patients at the scene of an injury, facilitating telemedicine, or taking people to specialized care like a mental health facility. I’m grateful to our EMS and fire departments for their partnership in elevating this issue, which has led to our bill and its unanimous passage in both legislative houses this past session. We urge the Governor to sign it into law by September 30th so it can have an immediate impact in supporting EMS providers and saving lives.”

Assemblymember Anna Kelles said, “Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provide essential life saving care throughout the state, including direct aid both on site and in transit to a medical facility. These services are especially critical in rural areas where access to hospitals may be

hours away. It is imperative that Governor Hochul signs our TIP & TAD legislation before September 30th so that the state can provide real solutions that address the lack of operational funding, insufficient wages, incomplete Medicaid coverage, inadequate Medicaid reimbursement rates, and antiquated restrictions that hamper all EMS systems across the state. Missing this deadline would mean our EMS providers lose out on an entire year of benefits. We have a duty to ensure EMS providers are reimbursed for providing treatment on site, and that providers have the flexibility in transporting patients to maximize their availability for all emergencies in their service area.”

Timothy P. Egan, Chairperson of the United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN), Executive Director of Rockland Paramedic Services, and CEO of Rockland Mobile Care, said “On behalf of our members across New York State who provide vital ambulance services, we urge Governor Kathy Hochul to sign the treatment in place/transport to alternate destinations (TIP/TAD) bill into law to support better patient care and save both EMS and hospital resources. It is imperative the bill be signed by September 30th so the implementation process will not be delayed a year. The goal of all healthcare should be to provide all patients with the right care at the right time in the most cost-effective manner possible, today and every day.”

NYS Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA) President Henry Ehrhardt said, “NYSVARA applauds the NYS Legislature for passing legislation that would ensure ambulance services are paid for the care they deliver to Medicaid patients, regardless of whether the person is transported to the hospital. Currently, EMS providers – including those staffed by community volunteers -- do not get paid and must absorb the cost when they provide treatment to Medicaid enrollees without taking them to the hospital emergency room. This additional funding will help ambulance services that are always trying to give people the best possible care in the right setting. When there are things we can do for you in the home, we want to do them without undermining our financial sustainability. Treat-in-Place is also particularly important given the nationwide shortage of EMTs and Paramedics and the overcrowding of hospital emergency rooms. When a patient is cared for in the home, both time and money are saved. We ask Governor Hochul to sign this bill *before* October 1, 2024, so the implementation process will not be delayed.”

NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC) Executive Director Stephen J. Acquario said, “EMS systems across the state are in critical condition in part because of a ‘one-size-fits-none’ Medicaid requirement that only reimburses EMS providers when they transport a patient to a hospital, regardless of whether or not that is the most appropriate care. The legislation authored by Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Kelles will empower EMS professionals to provide patients with the care they need at the scene or transport them to more appropriate locations like mental health clinics, substance abuse facilities, or urgent care without being financially penalized. We are proud to support this legislation and urge Governor Hochul to sign it into law.”

“Emergency Medical Services are a significant part of the mission of many of our volunteer fire departments,” said **President Eugene Perry of the Firefighters Association of the State of New York**. “Responding to our neighbors’ medical emergencies is vital to our state and an integral part of the role volunteer firefighters undertake every day. Providing those we serve with the care they need, where and how they need it while adding efficiencies and flexibility to the EMS system is good for everyone. FASNY applauds Senator Hinchey, Assembly Member Kelles, and the other sponsors of the legislation in the Rescue EMS Package for their leadership in addressing the issues facing EMS providers - whose services are essential - especially in rural settings. We look forward to continuing our work with the Legislature on initiatives to recruit and retain more volunteer firefighters and EMS providers - especially the entire package, which includes additional financial support for our dedicated members.”

“Emergency Medical Services are vital to the mission of many volunteer fire departments,” said **Anthony LaFerrera, President of the NYS Association of Fire Chiefs**. “Our fire departments manage internal ambulance service and collaborate closely with EMS teams in the field to deliver essential medical care. Allowing patients to be treated in the location of their emergency and provided transportation to alternative destinations other than a hospital for the most effective treatment is critical to supporting an EMS system that is in distress, especially in rural areas of the State where hospitals may not be in close proximity. The NYS Association of Fire Chiefs applauds Senator Hinchey, Assembly Member Kelles, and other sponsors of the Rescue EMS Legislative Package for their leadership in addressing the challenges faced by EMS providers.”

George June, Region 1 Director for the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York

(AFDSNY) and Ambulance Administrator for the Town of Catskill, said, "The AFDSNY supports Senator Hinchey, Assembly Member Kelles, and other sponsors of the Rescue EMS Package for their efforts to address the critical issues facing EMS providers, whose services are especially vital in rural areas. Fire Districts and Fire Departments across New York State are working hard to tackle the challenges of providing Emergency Medical Services and Fire Protection in an ever-changing environment. New legislation is essential to address these evolving challenges. Fire District and Fire Department-based ambulance services are on the front lines, delivering first response medical care and assistance for our neighbors' medical emergencies every day. They continuously seek more efficient and effective ways to serve our communities. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Legislature on initiatives to recruit and retain more volunteer firefighters and EMS providers."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S8486C

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to medicaid reimbursement for treatment in place and transportation to alternative health care settings by ambulance services

February 05, 2024

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?