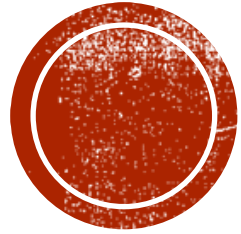


OVERVIEW OF EMS

Wapello County, Iowa



January 28, 2025 Presentation to Wapello County Board of Supervisors (4.8.25 updates)



A BRIEF HISTORY TIMELINE

1940 to now

1940'S

- Funeral homes provide transport service
- 1942, February: "Defense Ambulance Fund" fundraiser was a basketball game with Harlem Globetrotters. Goal to raise \$1200 for purchase of an ambulance by the Civil Defense Committee.

The image shows two vintage advertisements for funeral homes, one above the other. The top advertisement is for REECE Funeral Home. It features a dark oval logo with the name 'REECE' in white block letters and 'Funeral Home' in a script font below it. To the right of the logo is a split oval containing the text 'day or night!'. Above the logo, it says 'You may depend on us'. Below the logo, the address '607-609 East Second' and phone number 'Phone MU. 2-4509' are listed, followed by 'AMBULANCE SERVICE'. The bottom advertisement is for Traul Funeral Home. It features the name 'Traul Funeral Home' in a large, elegant script font. To the left is a graphic of a book with the words 'DIGNIFIED SERVICE'. In the center is a box with 'DIAL MU 2-2987'. To the right is a graphic of an ambulance with 'AMBULANCE Service' written on it. Below these elements, it says 'AIR CONDITIONED' and 'OXYGEN EQUIPPED'. At the bottom, the address '5th and Jefferson, Ottumwa' is provided.

You may depend on us **day or night!**

REECE
Funeral Home

607-609 East Second
Phone MU. 2-4509
AMBULANCE SERVICE

Traul Funeral Home

DIGNIFIED SERVICE

DIAL
MU 2-2987

AIR CONDITIONED

AMBULANCE Service

OXYGEN EQUIPPED

5th and Jefferson, Ottumwa



1950'S

- 1952: Ottumwa Fire Department begins 24-hour ambulance service. Ambulance provided by public donations and there was no fee for service.
- 1952, January: Fewer fires but Ambulance busier. 417 fire calls, 335 ambulance calls.
- 1953, July: Fire department questions the need of buying an ambulance. Four firemen laid off. City funds \$7800 for a new ambulance to replace an old one from revolving fund. Talk of placing old ambulance on south side. Discussion on raising money with subscriptions.
- 1953, November: Money made available to purchase new ambulance. Money comes from public safety fund to reimburse revolving fund. \$1200 in donations from Willing Circle of King's Daughters. Subscriptions not successful.
- 1955, December: Ambulance crash, taken out of service. New ambulance in service for one month involved in crash. Reliance on private services.





1960'S

- 1962: City begins charging \$8 per trip.
- 1966: City increases ambulance fee to \$12 per trip. Hospitals handle billing. Follow-up collection letters issued by city clerk's office.
- 1966: President Johnson receives report "Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society", later known as the "EMS White Paper". Report revealed in 1965 alone, vehicle accidents killed more Americans than were lost in the Korean War. This led to standardization of emergency training which led to the first nationally recognized curriculum for EMS- emergency medical technician-ambulance (EMT-A). Many consider this document the birth of modern EMS.



- 1967, June: Ottumwa Fire discovers it's expensive to run an ambulance service. **Fire Chief Smith wants rid of responsibility of ambulance.** City at max levy. 6 firemen salaries attributed to ambulance. Pension costs soaring due to firemen retiring with back injuries during working ambulance calls.
- 1967, August: Legality of charging for ambulance service, questioned. AG opinion: a county hospital may subsidize a private funeral home to provide ambulance service for the hospital but could not subsidize ambulance service to hospital other than a county hospital.
- 1967, August: Ambulance fee study. U of I Bureau of Police Science studying a state of crisis in emergency ambulance service. Many towns and cities police and fire picking up service because many funeral homes in Iowa are ceasing service due to new federal minimum wage for drivers.



1970'S

- 1970, California Governor Ronald Reagan signed into law the **Wedworth-Townsend Paramedic Act**. This law created conditions for the establishment of the first accredited paramedic training program in the U.S.
- 1972, **TV series "Emergency"** aired which mirrored the LA County Fire's paramedic program. This show portrayed paramedics providing care never seen before to the nation. Johnny and Roy set a standard expectation for the public and inspired many people to become providers that work in EMS today.
- 1973, June: **Funeral homes cease to provide ambulance service**. Four local funeral homes informed County Supervisors they would cease ambulance service on December 31st at midnight. Funeral homes had been handling transfers from nursing homes to hospital.
- 1973, **EMS Systems Act of 1973** established NHTSA (under DOT) as lead agency to develop EMS systems and provided funding for 300 systems nationwide. NHTSA encouraged state level involvement in developing trauma systems.



- 1974, March: Ottumwa looks for ways to improve ambulance service. City compared notes with Marshalltown. Ottumwa has one emergency unit based in the fire department and two non-emergency units based in health dept. No emergency service is provided to surrounding communities or rural.
- 1974, April: Ambulance plan revealed. **Ottumwa Fire Department will operate an emergency ambulance only and only in the city limits and a section of highway outside Ottumwa.** If fire department is busy, police dept. must respond with the ambulance. City will no longer provide non-emergency service and give ambulance to hospital for that service. Transfers will be driven by city personnel but attended by hospital personnel.
- 1974, April. Eldon Area Ambulance Service fundraises for an ambulance.
- 1974, June: **County takes over ambulance service from fire department.** Wapello County Ambulance Service begins operations June 24, 1974. Prior to that date only non-emergent transport service has been provided by the service in the county. The new service will respond to all calls anywhere in the county. Public is to call 682-8585. 12 members have been undergoing EMTA training at St. Joseph Hospital- the ambulance base.



- 1974, August: **New ambulance pact between city and county**. Under the agreement, the city will make its ambulance at Central Fire available for emergency service in the county in the three city-county ambulances are tied up. Discussions under way with surrounding towns for back-up service. Should ambulance show a loss, city and county would share in making up the deficit.
- 1975, April: New ambulance a worthy cause to raise money. Fundraising drive to raise \$17,500 to purchase the ambulance from the show “Emergency”. Neither city or county has a capital replacement fund. Current ambulances do not have heat or air conditioning.
- 1975, June: Need for a new technologically modern ambulance. Struggles with ambulances breaking down and no funds to replace. Federal Revenue Sharing funds were tapped to start the service. New ambulances cost \$17,500. Appeal to the public for fundraising. Union Bank managing the Ambulance Fund.



- 1975, July: Purchase of new ambulance. Fundraiser successful. New Dodge Maxi-van purchased for \$14,359. Replaces two units: 1968 Cadillac and 1962 Chevrolet. Service retains a 1971 Ford and 1969 Pontiac.
- 1978, August: Ambulance breaks down while transporting patient to Iowa City. Service director reports issues with constant repairs. Cost of new ambulance between \$20,000 - \$24,000. City and County contribute one quarter of service's annual budget which was \$170,000 for FY78. Receipts accounted for half of that.
- 1979, February: **County Supervisors discuss moving administrative jurisdiction to city since they have most of the calls.** Ottumwa has 26,000 of the county's 40,000 people. Costs are currently shared 50-50 but supervisors feel this isn't a fair share with a larger interest being in the city.
- 1979, February: Losing money. City accuses County of trying to dump ambulance service to city. Ambulance service receives \$75,000 from local subsidy.



1980'S

- 1980, February: Headline: **“County wants out of ambulance service”**. Ambulance service offered to the two hospitals by county. Ottumwa Hospital would consider both joint and single ownership. Hospital Administrator said “We have a deep commitment to emergency services”. Ambulance fee is \$65 per run. Medicare and Medicaid pays 80% of allowable charges- \$45 for emergency and \$40 for non-emergency. Ambulance budget for FY80 \$243,000. \$100,000 to be collected from patient fees.
- 1980. April. State Representative Gettings proposed a bill to allow counties that don't operate hospitals to levy .27 cent per 1,000.
- 1980, April: St. Joseph Hospital proposes hospitals, doctor's offices, nursing homes pay a fee to support ambulances. Ottumwa Hospital has already proposed building ambulance facilities on their grounds and utilize the crew in hospital when not on runs and reimburse the county for that time. FY 81 ambulance budget was \$304,800 with city and county each contributing \$90,000 which still leaves \$4,000 deficit.



- 1980, July: Ambulance funding a problem. City and County contributions increase from \$48,000 to \$90,000. Parks Commissioner Parker said city would have to lay off three positions from police or fire or not fill retirements.
- 1980, August: Article “Ambulance attendants get sophisticated training”. There are different levels of advanced medical training for EMTs now from EMT1 to Paramedic. Ambulance service averages 8 calls per day. 80% of calls involve elderly with heart or respiratory ailments while others fall and injure themselves. The cost to convert the service from a basic EMT service to Paramedic may cost \$20,000 for equipment and supplies, not including ambulances.
- 1980, State legislation passed bill that takes effect Jan. 1981 allowing counties to vote on an EMS levy for .27 cents per thousand.
- 1980, September: New ambulance tax levy question discussed. New tax could generate \$96,000. County has been relying on federal revenue sharing funds to support ambulance.



- 1980, September: **Supervisors place tax levy on November ballot.**
- 1980, November: Ambulance tax levy fails at the polls by 119 votes. (so does the hotel-motel tax).
- 1980, November: Ambulance fate may be up to Congress. The US Congress deciding if they will continue the federal revenue sharing program. The county receives \$341,000 from this program which their \$90,000 share comes from.
- 1980, November: Ambulance staffing challenges. Loss of “EMT-1” designation means loss of capability. EMT’s fired for misconduct. EMT-1 is a trauma designation, EMT-2 is a medical designation.
- 1980, December: St. Joseph and Ottumwa Hospital work out a plan to move ambulance management to Ottumwa Hospital.



- 1981, January: Jim Ragland, backed by St. Joseph Hospital pursues setting up a city **911 phone number**. Phone company says equipment costs \$7,000 to \$9,000. System would cost city an extra \$150 per month. Hospital waives ambulance bay rent fee of \$200 in exchange for backing of the program. Hospital pays for the 911 equipment. New 911 emergency number to be published in the new directories in May 1981.
- 1981, April: County surrenders ownership right and authority to city so city can negotiate with hospital to take over the service. County still agrees to help purchase new ambulances needed by hospital. Ambulances to be owned by city and leased to the hospital.
- 1981, April: **County gets out of the ambulance business and gives official blessing to Ottumwa Hospital's plan to provide ambulance service beginning July 1.** Supervisors terminate their 7 year agreement with the city, sells Wapello County ambulances to city for \$1. County agrees to pay half cost of three new ambulances. Ottumwa Hospital asks for three year agreement with city and county to subsidize operation totaling \$152,000 for the purchase of ambulances. Ottumwa Hospital's offer to take over operations includes upgrading the service to paramedic level.



- 1981, May: Amended contract with hospital was approved with concerns on how the hospital was going to use the money from city and county. Hospital asked for original language that specifically designated ambulances to be changed to include equipment for the ambulances.
- **1981, July 1. Ottumwa Regional Mobile Intensive Care Services (ORMICS) begins county-wide service** with a three year agreement that includes a public subsidy of \$152,000 to purchase ambulances and equipment with option to cease operations with a six-month notice. By end of 1981, service has 11 full-time paramedics and five EMTs.
- 1981, December: Ambulance service and fire department agree to cross-train to improve skills and service.



- 1984, January: ORMICS makes request that city and county continue subsidies. Asks city and county for \$33,250 each. Request is based on equipment replacement costs. 1983 contribution was \$17,500 each, which was the last year of the agreement. Tax discussion continues.
- 1984, January: Hospital proposes public subsidies continue through 1988 when \$79,000 would be given. Average ORMICS bill is \$136. Basic rate in Ottumwa is \$85 plus \$3 per mile one way, supplies and cardiac monitor extra.
- 1987, February: Southern Iowa Counties having a hard time funding ambulance service.
- 1989, June: **Sunnyslope closes so no tax levy ability.** Sunnyslope trustees denied a property tax levy request last fall. Only a county hospital can levy for ambulance. Ambulance fee increased from \$85 to \$100. **Federal Revenue Sharing funds ended in 1987 that allowed subsidies which went for equipment.**



1990'S

- 1990, September: Agency's First Responders helping with responses. Service started four years ago.
- 1994, November: ORMICS names Paramedic Service of the year by Iowa EMS Association and the National Association of EMTs.
- 1995, June: Chillicothe First Responders formed to serve Cass & Richland Townships, Cities of Chillicothe & Kirksville.
- 1998, December: ORHC Foundation dedicates new ambulance with proceeds from Great Southeast Iowa Duck Race and Swiftwater Festival. An old ORMICS ambulance given to the Eldon Community. Eldon donates old ambulance to Rotary Club to be sent to Central America.



2000'S

- 2000, July: ORMICS fund raiser (Duck Race). **ORMICS receives no funding from city, county or tax levy.** ORMICS has staff of 24 paramedics. Fundraiser to help purchase a new ambulance that costs \$86,668.
- 2002, January: Ottumwa Fire Department raising money to buy defibrillators and other equipment to be “compatible” with ORMICS.
- 2002, January: 20 Ottumwa Fire Fighters training to become medical first responders to assist ORMICS. Buying 3 defibrillators.
- 2002, February: ORMICS welcomes **Ottumwa Fire Medical First Responders Program.**
- 2002, June: Ottumwa Fire to focus their first responder program on south side of Ottumwa.



- 2002, June: Ottumwa Fire to focus their first responder program on south side of Ottumwa.
- 2003, April: Wapello County EMS Assn. working on training opportunities, push for EMD and seeking to work with 911 Board, working on a community trauma education program, Assn. seeks greater community involvement in EMS.
- 2003, August: Struggling to keep ambulance service in Blakesburg.



2010'S

- 2010: State of Iowa develops “EMS System Standards” and provides a scoring rubric to local partners.
- 2010, March: Ottumwa Regional Health Center sells to RegionalCare, a for-profit company.
- 2012: Wapello County EMS Association conducts public meeting of stakeholders to review System Standards.
- 2019: Wapello County Public Health decertifies Medicare/Medicaid, no longer provides in-home services.



2020'S

- 2020: **Worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. The “Great Resignation”** occurs. Both dramatically affecting workforces across all sectors, healthcare is especially hit hard.
- 2022: Wapello County EMS Association revisits System Standards, provides data to Service Area 5 Healthcare Coalition as required by the State. Becomes annual requirement with goals and action plans.
- 2022, October: IHCC EMS Advisory Committee discusses how to get EMS Education into the high schools as early recruitment. Sub-committee formed.
- 2022: **Ottumwa Regional asks local officials for financial assistance to shore up EMS services.**
- 2022 & 2023: Discussions between hospital and local officials about support. No definitive actions taken.



CURRENT

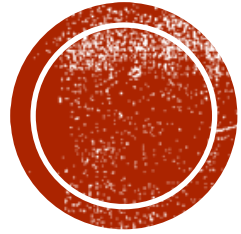
- 2023, January: Letter to the community from ORHC CEO William Keifer, co-signed by community leaders explaining moving ORMICS to a conditional level PM service.
- 2023, July: EMA presents EMS as Essential Service Resolution to Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Wapello County EMS Association representing all EMS services. Resolution supported but fails to move forward mainly due to other competing priorities.
- 2023, May: Wapello Co. EMA in partnership with Van Buren Co. Hospital, Davis Co. Hospital, Centerville Fire & Rescue, & IHCC launch a 4-county partnership for a summer youth EMT internship program.
- 2023, July: EMA presents EMS as Essential Service Resolution to Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Wapello Co. EMS Assn. Resolution supported but failed to move forward mainly due to other competing priorities.



CURRENT

- 2024, January. Supervisor Bryan Ziegler brings up topic of EMS. EMA again presents EMS Essential Service discussion with Board of Supervisors, meets with local officials and stakeholders. Wapello County EMS Association reviews draft Advisory Council list as recommendation to Board of Supervisors. EMA to take lead on Essential Service work, coordinating next steps.
- 2024, May: IHCC continues the summer EMT internship program with grant funding.
- 2024, February 1: EMS Essential Service Resolution 60-day notice published.
- 2024, April 8: EMS Essential Service Resolution first reading passes.
- 2024, April 29: Public meeting regarding EMS Essential service process with all elected officials, open to public.



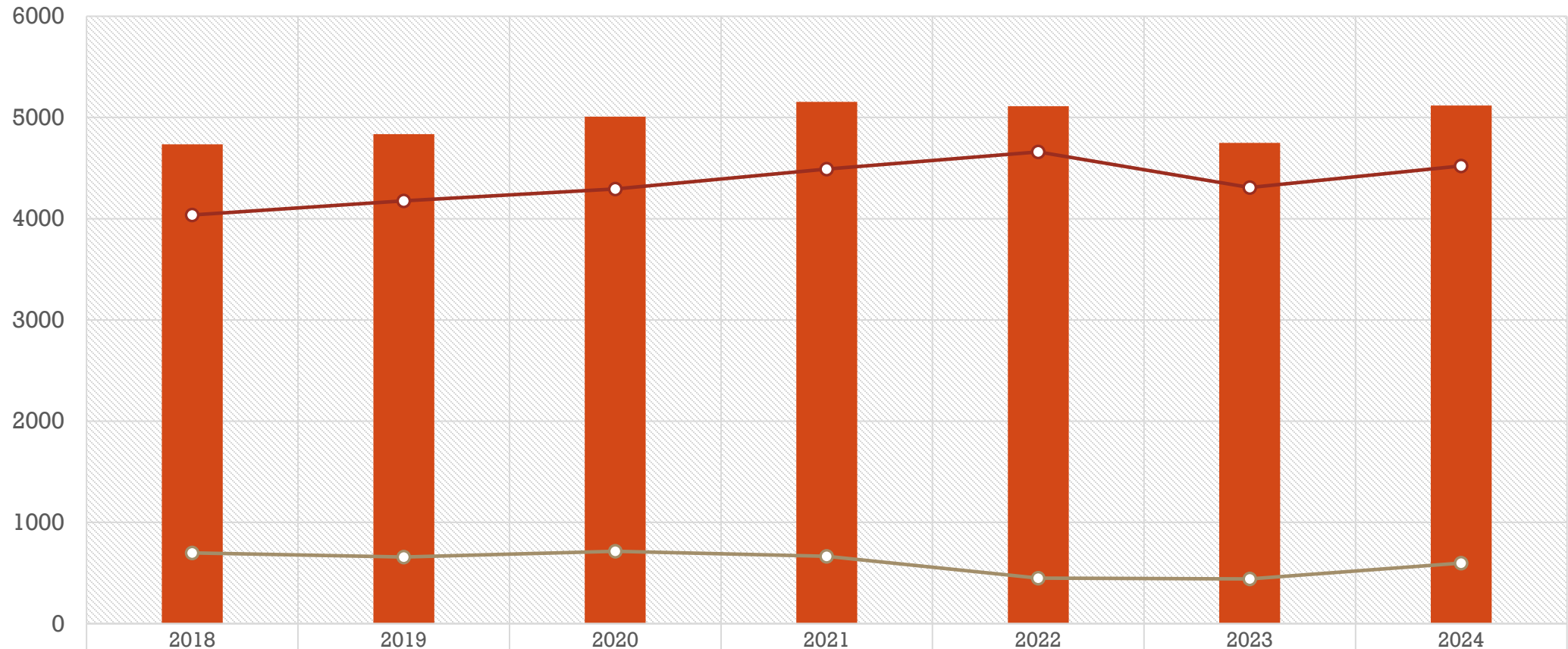


WHAT DOES OUR PUBLIC ASK OF EMS?



ORMIC'S DATA

EMS Calls types 2018 - 2024

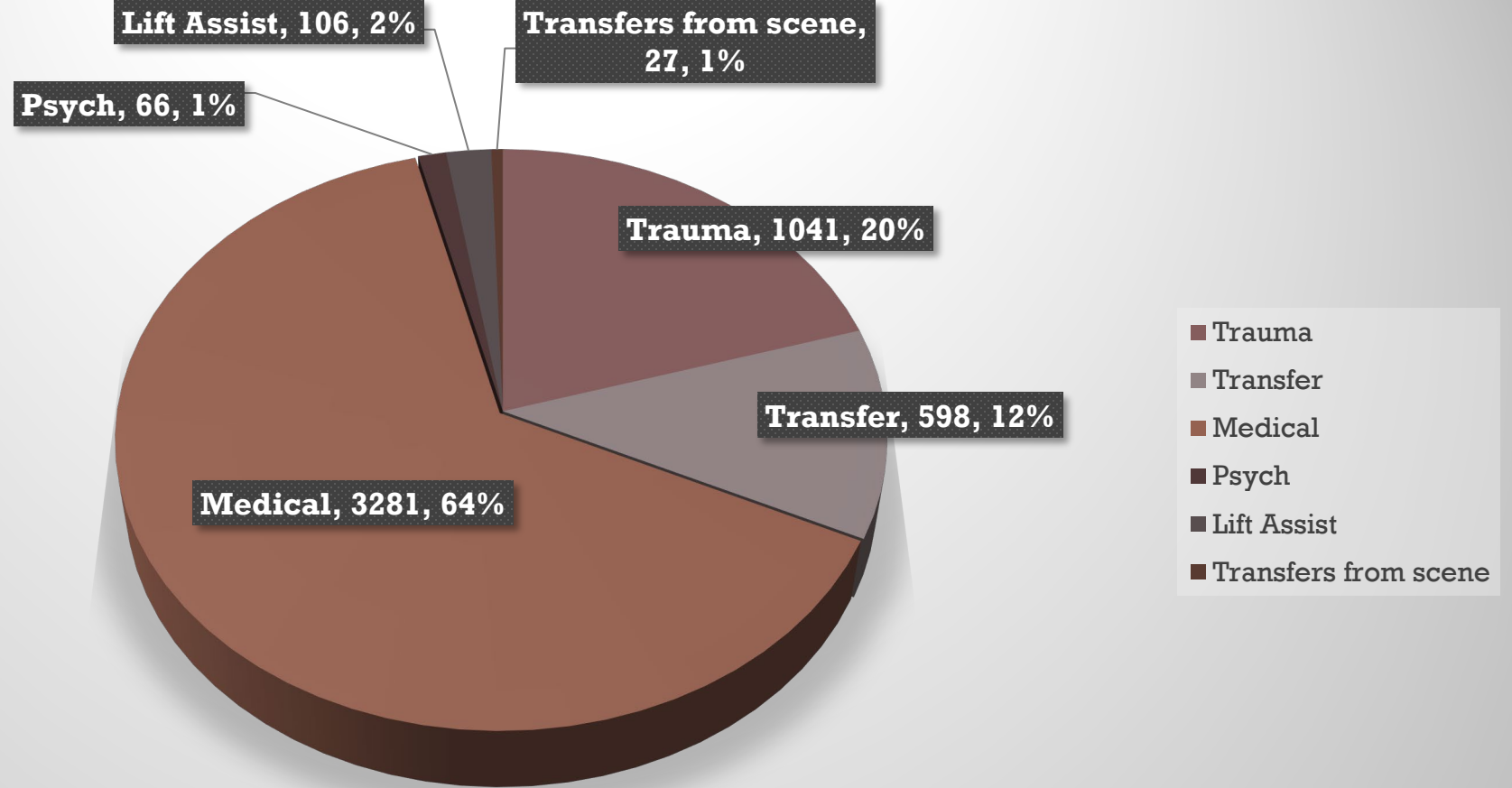


Total	4736	4836	5009	5155	5111	4750	5119
911	4037	4177	4294	4490	4660	4308	4521
Transfer	699	659	715	665	451	442	598

Total 911 Transfer



2024 TYPES OF CALLS FOR SERVICE - ORMICS



WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

- The COVID-19 pandemic created significant workforce challenges across all sectors of our economy.
- The healthcare industry was especially hit hard by the pandemic
- The “Great Resignation” exacerbated an already predicted mass retirement of the Baby Boomer generation
- EMS not as an attractive profession to millennials vs tech jobs
- Pay for EMS providers very low compared to other opportunities and even other EMS services



SO WE TRIED SOME THINGS

- Four county project to start a summer EMT internship for area youth
- Ottumwa Regional increases pay for EMS staff- twice
- Ottumwa Regional offers sign-on bonuses to recruit new staff
- New partnership with IHCC in several health programs, including EMS



BECOME AN EMT!

Pre-register NOW for our Fall Evening EMT Course

Program Overview:

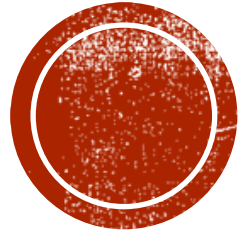
- Orientation Sept. 17th
- Class Sept. 24– Mar. 18
- Class 6-9:30pm, Tue. & Thur.
- Ottumwa Campus
- Class, lab & ER/Ambulance Clinical

Financial Assistance:

Contact Maggie Horan 641-683-5149 or Maggie.horan@indianhills.edu

For more information or to pre-register contact Lori Reeves 641-683-5337 or lori.reeves@indianhills.edu

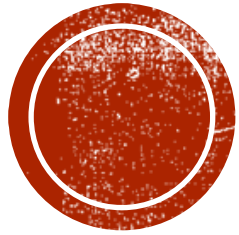




WHAT THE LAW REQUIRE FOR EMS SERVICES?

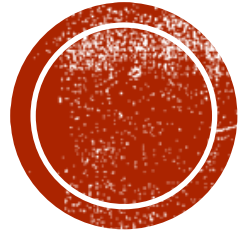


NOTHING



Township code 359.42 states townships **MAY** provide service but comes from fire levy

Iowa Code 422D was passed to allow counties to declare EMS Essential and allow them to ask voters for funding. Creates Advisory Council to oversee and make recommendations to Board of Supervisors.



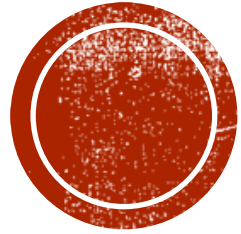
WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS FOR EMS?



IOWA SYSTEM STANDARDS ASSESSMENT- 2017 UPDATE

- County EMS Association conducts annually and reports to Service Area 5
- EMS Association works on best practices and improvements to system
- Association is a peer group and has no authority





HOW DO DEMANDS AND NEEDS MEET STANDARDS?



EMS ESSENTIAL SERVICE & ADVISORY COUNCIL

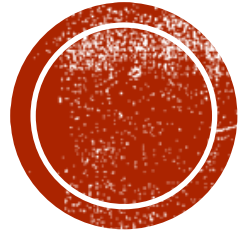
- County designation as Essential Service establishes a FORMAL advisory council that serves as an advisory arm of the Board of Supervisors
- Council will study needs thoroughly and devise a comprehensive county SYSTEM
- A recommendation of a system structure and costs reported back to BOS
- BOS determined what will be asked of the voters for funding



ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Ongoing tasks of the Advisory Council could be management of the system and/or
- Monitoring of performance metrics of the system and/or
- Management of funding and/or
- Other directives by the Board of Supervisors

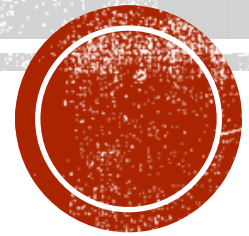




**WHY ARE WE DOING THIS
PROCESS?**



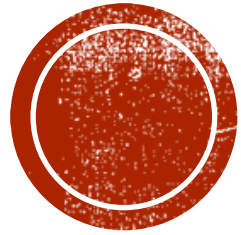
**TO BUILD A COUNTY-WIDE EMS
SYSTEM THAT SERVES THE NEEDS
OF ALL RESIDENTS IN WAPELLO
COUNTY IN A SUSTAINABLE,
RELIABLE STRUCTURE**



TIMELINE

- **January 14th-** Board work session to review Ch 422D, Essential Service Resolution, educate Supervisors on history and the need.
- **January 28th-** Board discussion and approval to move forward with consideration of the resolution.
- **February 1st-** a 60-day notice will be published in Ottumwa Courier that gives the public notice the Board will be considering the resolution on April 8th.
- **April 8th-** First reading of Resolution. Board approval of Council Charter and Council membership appointments.
- **April 22nd-** Second reading of the Resolution.
- **May 6th-** Third reading and adoption of Resolution. Formal establishment of Council. Set performance metrics.
- Monthly meetings of the Advisory Council TBD
- Date of Ballot question TBD





NEXT STEP?

A motion and vote today to publish a 60-day public notice the EMS Essential Service Resolution will be considered on it's first reading on April 8th, 2025 at 9:30 am, Wapello County Courthouse 3rd floor