



Vermont Ambulance Association

Vermont Ambulance Services are a critical component of Vermont's Emergency Response system responding to 85,847 calls for service in 2016.

Data provided by the Vermont Office of EMS

House Bill H.197, Senate S.93

- ◆ **We would like to thank the legislators that introduced this important legislation.**
- ◆ **The Association and our membership support efforts to address the mental health needs of our first responders.** EMS providers experience difficult life changing situations every day. Many of our responders are on call day after day working with different services in a constant state of service to our communities. This accumulation of stress and trauma effects the longevity of our providers and has led to a nation wide crisis of responder suicide.
- ◆ In Vermont EMS Delivery is complicated. Service is provided through a combination of municipal, non-profit and private services. It is delivered with volunteer, paid call and career providers, each of which is dedicated to the community that they serve. Funding systems are as diverse as the delivery models but share the common struggle of providing service with very low reimbursements and increasing demand.
- ◆ Our membership has several concerns:
 - Several recent publications have linked mental health and PTSD in responders to excessive work and sleep schedules. Can we add a prevention component and funding?
 - What will be the resulting effect on insurance rates and agency experience modifiers? Ambulance services are struggling to stay operational, any additional premium will undo the modest increase in funding the legislature passed last session.
 - How are responders that work with multiple agencies treated? How is liability assigned?
 - Are prior service, active duty or National Gard members treated differently? Does the Presumption under this law effect their ability to apply for VA benefits?
 - Services face assumed premium for board members. Can this be corrected?

Vermont Ambulance services continue to be on the front line of Vermont's battle with addiction. Every day EMS professionals from services all over this state respond to mental health and substance abuse emergencies, providing lifesaving intervention and access to our health care system.