



NAEMT Position Statement Pay and Benefits for EMS

Statement: NAEMT is committed to advocating for fair and equitable pay and benefits for EMS practitioners on parity with their partners in public safety and other allied health care services.

People throughout the United States rely on the quick actions and professional, competent care provided by EMTs and Paramedics. EMS practitioners are required to respond to varied incident types in often dangerous and austere environments, providing a vital medical service caring for the nation's sick and injured 24-hours a day. However, wages and benefits have not increased to enable the EMS workforce to grow in accordance of the ever increasing public demand.

EMS has evolved, expanding its scope of responsibilities over the past 45 years from the basic level of care provided by primarily volunteers to a highly trained and increasingly career-based workforce. As the overall population increases and grows older, higher demand for the services of EMS will occur. However, wages and benefits for EMS practitioners have not kept up with an ever growing demand for services, placing a significant drain on the EMS workforce. Recruitment and retention are significantly affected within the profession, creating a chronic shortage in communities across the nation, particularly in rural areas. EMS practitioners are being forced to move out of EMS to professions that provide adequate wages, benefits and the opportunity for advancement in order to support their families.

EMTs and Paramedics wages are significantly less than those of law enforcement, fire fighters and other allied healthcare occupations.

Background: EMS was built on a primarily volunteer-practitioner base to provide basic life support to the sick and injured. Funding for development of EMS and support for volunteers has largely disappeared over the years, with career services becoming more prevalent. As the roles and responsibilities and advances in prehospital medical care have increased, the educational requirements have also grown. The demand for services is ever increasing while the EMS workforce decreases due to the rising cost of living and educational requirements compounded with stagnant wages and benefits.

References:

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7th Annual National EMS System Survey-EMS Magazine
National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration: EMS Workforce: EMS on the Hill-
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