



Compassionate professionals delivering the highest quality emergency medicine, specialty care, and training to our providers and communities.

2022 has been one of our most challenging years in EMS that I can remember. Coming off a busy year towards the end of the pandemic, this year has had some unique challenges. The two main factors making this a very dynamic and challenging year is the current state of the EMS workforce, coupled with the challenges in EMS funding. One of our primary noted changes in 2022 was the reduced amount of inter-facility transports due to decreased staffing and overwhelmed tertiary care centers we commonly transfer too. Our agency relies heavily on inter-facility transports to support our budget as our 911 transports do not cover the expenses to maintain a 24/7/365 Paramedic level EMS service. This is not unique to CALEX as most EMS agencies rely on inter-facility transports to help support their budgets and to keep town funding requests as reasonable as possible. State and Federal reimbursements, specifically Medicare and Medicaid, do not cover the actual costs. Roughly, we lose about 51.65% due to fee schedules that we don't have control over. We only get paid by Medicare / Medicaid what they reimburse and that is not the actual costs to deliver the service. Inter-facility transports, due to the longer distance billable loaded miles, generates a more substantial part of the budget. In 2022, what we have experienced is a drastic reduction in requests for two reasons: First, the current state of the healthcare workforce along with increased demand for healthcare. Many of our tertiary care centers (DHMC and UVMMC) have not been accepting patients due to decreased staffing and being overwhelmed. This forces our local hospital to keep patients here longer and care for them without transfer. Second, we have noticed increase in demand but a decrease in patient acuity. Meaning less acute illnesses or traumatic injuries that would require transfer. We have seen a reduction of roughly 125 inter-facility transfers this year as compared to 2021. This represents a significant loss in revenue. We really don't know what to expect for 2023, but we know if we continue to see these similar numbers next year, we will have to make some significant changes. Many EMS systems are struggling around the state and nationally with funding due to rising costs to provide the service, however the reimbursements are not keeping up with those increases. The workforce, since the pandemic, has also created challenges as many other careers are paying much higher hourly rates than we can afford in EMS. This is currently a point of discussion that state leaders and legislators are looking to find some funding mechanisms to support. We will closely monitor this and support any opportunities to assure EMS is an essential service supported appropriately to provide workforce professionals that stand ready 24/7/365.

The workforce remains a top priority for all of us in Public Safety and beyond. Our staffing has stepped up in a big way to meet the needs to fill the current openings. We have teamed up locally to partner with St. Johnsbury Academy Adult Education program to offer our very first EMT course out of the newly renovated space on Eastern Ave. We were successful last year, with hiring two full-time EMT's out of this program. We are looking forward to beginning another EMT course in early January and are hopeful for some additional staffing from this program.

CALEX continues to provide the highest quality of prehospital care to all the towns we serve providing 911 coverage at the Paramedic level 24/7/365. We have been asked to provide services to Granby this year, so we are now serving 10 towns – Saint Johnsbury, Waterford, Barnet, Concord, Kirby, Victory, Granby, Danville, Walden and Peacham. Our volumes were down a bit overall this year due to the reasons I mentioned above. 911 responses were slightly higher while transfers were less. CALEX responded to 2,387 911 responses and 469 being Interfacility Transfers and Medical transports. Our average response time to the scene for our entire service area 8 minutes 15 secs. Overall, our agency responded to 2,856 requests for service. These interfacility transports are a critical part of our service, reducing any delays of getting our patients to definitive care whether it be trauma services, cardiac care ,or other specialty services at a higher-level care facility such as DHMC or UVMMC and other hospitals across the New England. This year we transported as far as Albany, NY several times due to other hospitals declining admissions.

In 2022, we reduced our fleet of 5 ambulances to 3. We will take delivery of our next replacement ambulance, June 2023. Our current fleet is in great shape, and we feel will be a bonus to are budget next year.

As we end 2022, I look forward to a safe and successful year of providing the very best pre hospital care to our communities. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and experienced team providing care for when it is needed. We hope you will continue to support us and approve our funding requests so we can continue providing the very best Emergency Medical Care to the region. Lastly, please take some time and learn CPR /AED use, we would be glad to assist you. You could save a life!

In closing, I would like to thank all of our staff, their families, and the CALEX Board of Directors and our dedicated dispatchers for their continued support and dedication to the Agency's mission.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Wright, NRP
Chief Executive Officer