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February 2021

**Support for a Task Force to address issues for Rural EMS**

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Heastie,

The New York State Association for Rural Health [NYSARH] has long identified the fragility of the rural emergency medical services [EMS] system as an area of concern. In 2019, this was the topic of our annual Policy Panel and we have remained engaged with this issue. Rural EMS is a diverse system of for-profit, non-profit and municipal agencies that include both volunteer and paid personnel.

One size does NOT fit all!

We write to you in support of a Task Force proposed by Senator Michelle Hinchey [S3503] and Assembly Member Santabarbara [A1561].

This Task Force will conduct a study on the unique challenges faced by New York State ambulance and EMS services in rural areas and seek long term solutions to such challenges. The study shall include, but not be limited to the following: (a) determining and assessing business models for ambulance services in rural areas throughout the state; (b) assessing various methods to fund or otherwise raise capital for such services; and (c) studying any other issue such task force deems relevant.

The Task Force will be required to report back within twelve months, so that the Legislature may enact recommended changes during the 2022 Session.

NYSARH is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization working to preserve and improve the health of the citizens in rural New York State.  NYSARH membership includes representatives of all facets of the rural health care industry, as well as individuals and students.  On many different levels, NYSARH serves individuals, consumers, non-profit organizations, government agencies and officials, health care facilities, emergency medical service providers, long-term care organizations, businesses, universities, foundations, associations, and other stakeholders in rural health.

Sincerely,

CC:

Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner of Health

Tina Kim, Assistant Secretary for Health

Robert Mujica, New York State Budget Director