



# Washington Ambulance Association Annual Report

2016

109 Bee Brook Road - P.O. Box 294 - Washington Depot, CT 06794 - [www.washingtonambulance.org](http://www.washingtonambulance.org)

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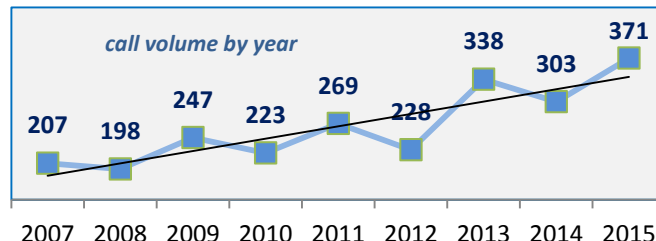
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## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Washington Ambulance has had another busy year. We continue to average about one call per day, although the pace is not as uniform as that average would suggest. On October 26, we responded to five calls in 4 ½ hours!

Analysis of our call data shows that the main reason for the steady increase in dispatches is the aging of our community. Over the last decade, the median age in Washington has increased by over seven years, over the next decade, it is expected to increase again.



**Our mission is "to serve our town by providing professional and compassionate emergency medical services."** We are acutely aware that many of the emergencies that we see in patients over 65 years of age could have been prevented. We see a recurring pattern where something has happened – a new diagnosis, a new medication, or a fall – something has changed that reduces a person’s ability to live independently in their own home – but the individual and family have not been able to identify or access the supports, services and programs they may need. As many of us have struggled with this in our own families, we know that these challenges are NOT easy. However, we believe that if we as a community can identify, prioritize and tackle the main problems associated with our changing demographics, we can make a positive difference in our small town.

True to our 1942 pledge to provide our ambulance service as a public benefaction, **we are one of only a few non-billing emergency ambulance services in the state of Connecticut.** We often are asked, "How much would it cost if you sent a bill?" The CT Department of Public Health establishes the maximum allowable rates annually. Rates vary depending upon response level and mileage of the transport. When ambulances respond as a Basic Life Support Ambulance (a crew of EMTs and EMRs) the average charge, per current maximum allowable rates, easily exceeds \$600.00. Should the nature of the emergency warrant an upgrade to Advanced Life Support Level (a Paramedic onboard), the average charge easily exceeds \$900.00. These charges can put a burden on patients even with health insurance. Most affordable plans have high deductibles. In small focus groups, people have told us they may hesitate to call an ambulance in an emergency because of fear they can't afford the charge. We are able to provide this vital service at no charge because *WE* volunteer as Emergency Medical Technicians and Responders and because of *YOUR* generosity in support of our hard work and dedication. **Together, we all make a difference!**



Another significant challenge in emergency services is the increasing sophistication of the treatment that today’s EMTs must provide. Here’s an example. If you call 911 complaining of chest pain, your phone call sets off an immediate, coordinated and sophisticated response. The first responder to reach you will conduct a rapid assessment. He or she will ask you questions, take your pulse and blood pressure, get you started on oxygen, and reassure you, **"We’re going to take good care of you."** When the ambulance arrives, we will move you quickly and carefully into the ambulance. There, we will place the electrodes needed for an EKG, which we will send wirelessly to our supervising emergency room physician for interpretation and direction. A paramedic will join our team on the ambulance to provide more advanced treatment. If the EKG shows that one of the heart’s major arteries is blocked (an ST-Elevation Myocardial Infarction), we will not go to New Milford or Charlotte Hungerford, but will take you straight to the cardiac catheterization lab at Danbury or Waterbury, where you will be astonished to see the team that is waiting for you.



*Our Facebook page always has something of interest.*

The good news for you is that the quality of emergency care you can expect is going nowhere but up! The challenge for us is the imperative to spend more time on training every year, working behind the scenes to develop and maintain an ever longer list of skills.

## 2015 ANNUAL APPEAL

Recognizing contributions made between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016

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Paula and Eric Madoff

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## 2015 ANNUAL APPEAL

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### IN HONOR OF

All of the volunteers!  
Deb Forese  
Heidi Johnson

Georgianna L. Middlebrook  
John Millington

Randall Rives Perkins  
Susie Wallace-Wyant

Mary Jane Yurchak  
Washington Ambulance Assoc. EMTs  
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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT. IT MATTERS!

We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this donor list for contributions made between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016. We apologize for any errors. Please let us know about them by emailing [info@washingtonambulance.org](mailto:info@washingtonambulance.org).

## Service Upgrade

Being prepared for emergencies takes a lot of advance work and planning. We'd like to tell you about just a portion of that work. During the last two years, we have spent an enormous amount of time analyzing our town's ambulance needs. It's interesting to note that our original Articles of Association, approved in 1942, said "The purposes for which said corporation is formed are the following, to wit: To own, maintain, equip, and operate an ambulance or ambulances within the Town of Washington." Our Founding Fathers envisioned the possibility of more than one ambulance. Seventy four years later, that vision is a reality!

Chief Adam Woodruff (pictured at center right) led the work of the New Ambulance Committee. This committee developed specs for our new ambulance, qualified vendors, solicited bids, and chose a manufacturer. At the same time, Assistant Chief Heidi Johnson and Captain Bill Hickey (also pictured at right) co-chaired an Old Ambulance Committee. That group analyzed whether it was desirable and/or possible to keep our current ambulance in service, thereby becoming a two ambulance service. Ultimately, the Committee recommended to our Board that we should become a two ambulance service.



The principal arguments for this recommendation can be summarized as peace of mind for all. If one ambulance is on a call or out of service for any other reason, we should still have an ambulance in town and available to respond. It will also allow for faster response time should a second ambulance be needed on a scene. Currently, if a 911 call comes in when our ambulance is not available, 911 dispatches Washington Ambulance first responders (who go directly to the scene in their personal vehicles), Washington Volunteer Fire Department with its rescue vehicle, and an ambulance and crew from the closest bordering mutual aid town.



Our Board's concerns about this recommendation were principally financial. We share their concerns. Your financial support has been so consistent and so extraordinary that we have no debt. However, the purchase of the new ambulance has depleted our savings. Even with all-volunteer staffing and no payroll to meet, maintaining two ambulances will increase both our capital and operating costs. For that reason, our Board has authorized us to try this as a one-year experiment. Next year, we will re-evaluate the costs, benefits, and financial viability of maintaining two ambulances.

## Working Behind the Scenes

While the work of the New and Old Ambulance Committees was very important, it was not the only thing going on behind the scenes. During the last year, we also: began the process of strategic planning, a process that will continue into next year; established the Audit and Long Term Finance Planning Committee; acquired a Lucas Chest Compression System; added three new EMTs to our team; trained on Narcan administration for opioid overdoses; continued to publish our email newsletter; were featured on News 8, in a story about water safety; rolled out a Facebook presence; offered a number of CPR classes, as well as first aid training for the staff of a local restaurant. Finally, we supported numerous community events by standing by with our volunteer crews and/or the ambulance. Our standby commitments included the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks, several regattas and races, Community Day and the Gilmore Girls Festival. We are looking forward to standing by at Holiday in the Depot. If you should see us at any of these kinds of events, please do stop by to say hello. If we have no patients, we are always happy to give you a quick tour of the ambulance.

We want to assure you that we do also set aside some time for fun. We began 2016 with a reception at the Gunn Memorial Library to recognize Susie Wallace-Wyant (pictured at right) for her many years of service as Chief of Operations. Speakers included First Selectman Mark Lyon, Washington Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mark Showalter, Dr. Thomas Koobatian, and author/EMT Ann Leary (who had us in stitches). We are also grateful to Bev Weaving, our former Assistant Chief, for her many years of service. Thank you!



Want to know more? Please visit our website and Facebook page, sign up for our email newsletter, or drop us a note. In an emergency, it's always 911. For any kind of non-emergency question, please call us at 860-868-7913 or drop us a note: [info@washingtonambulance.org](mailto:info@washingtonambulance.org).