

Volunteers ring alarm: Cash-strapped community ambulance corps to charge insurance

BY [Lisa L. Colangelo](#)
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Monday, February 22nd 2010, 4:00 AM

Helping their neighbors isn't just a hobby for sisters [Kathy Sexton-Dalbey](#) and [Kelly Sexton](#) of the [Woodhaven-Richmond Hill Volunteer Ambulance Corps](#).

It's a family tradition.

Their father, Timothy, helped start the corps 45 years ago. It's where he met their mom, Patricia.

That history gives them even more reason to keep the struggling volunteer ambulance service afloat.

A recent drop in donations, government grants and volunteers has hobbled the once-thriving group.

"The financial times have hit everyone hard," said Sexton-Dalbey, "an emergency medical technician who is chief operating officer of the corps.

For the first time, they will be charging patients' insurance carriers for their service.

People who do not have insurance will not be charged. And no one will be asked to pay any money out of pocket.

"None of us get paid, and we never charged," she said. "But now we have to charge against the insurance to get some kind of payment."

She estimates it costs a minimum of \$65,000 a year just to keep the service running.

The group has about 35 active members. That's down from a high of 135 more than a decade ago.

Members of the community pulled together recently to hold a pasta dinner benefit.

The corps has a page on [Facebook](#) and is looking into new ways to raise money. Their pals at the cash-strapped [Woodhaven](#)

Advertisement



9/17: Homeowners Fail to Take Advantage of Gov. Refi Plan

\$90,000 Mortgage for Under \$499/Month!

RefinancingNow.org

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

[Residents' Block Association](#) recently contributed \$500 to help out.

Block Association President Ed Wendell has seen firsthand how the volunteer ambulance corps helps the neighborhood.

"My wife's mom needed a transfer from one hospital to another," said [Wendell](#). "A private ambulance would have charged hundreds of dollars, which she couldn't afford. The corps did it for free."

Sexton-Dalbey said the corps also is a good training ground for people interested in the medical field.

"We handle everything from sick calls to jumpers on the J train to transports," she said. "If we had the staff, we would be here 2-4/7."

For information about the Woodhaven-Richmond Hill Volunteer Ambulance Corps, call (718) 296-7918.

icolangelo@nydailynews.com

Advertisement



Save \$26 a month
and lock in your price for ONE YEAR!
Switch today! 1-877-866-8603

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™