



Regional approach makes sense for ambulance services

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MPNnow.com — In a medical emergency, time waiting can be the difference between life and death. But in many communities, the ability of emergency medical personnel to respond in a timely fashion is becoming increasingly difficult.

Many volunteer ambulance services lack sufficient numbers because of our increasingly hectic lives and the extensive training demands required by the state.

The issue has become particularly acute in places like Palmyra, where the fire department's ambulance has had difficulty responding to emergency calls. In a recent case, a man with a heart attack waited nearly a half hour for an ambulance to arrive.

Such instances are at the core of a proposal to create a regional ambulance service that would provide 24-hour coverage for Macedon and Palmyra and be staffed with both paid and volunteer medics and drivers. The service would be based at the Macedon Public Safety Building on Wayneport Road, with a possible satellite location at the former Palmyra-Macedon bus garage on Walworth Road in Macedon, close to the Palmyra town line.

The idea was hatched from a Shared Services Committee that is looking at ways to share and consolidate municipal services in Palmyra and Macedon and hopefully save taxpayer money.

But this proposal might not be a money saver over the short term. Providing 24-hour coverage will require employing a good number of professional medics, something many communities are not used to underwriting.

If paid EMTs are indeed the future, though, a shared approach between Palmyra and Macedon should help save money on personnel and equipment — including ambulances — as well as administration and training.

It would also solve the shameful turf-war battle between the village and town of Macedon, which both have ambulance services — not a responsible use of tax money.

While there is plenty of work ahead for leaders in Palmyra and Macedon to make this happen, a regional ambulance is the right approach financially and, more importantly, from a patient standpoint.

Ultimately, said Charlie Ziegler, chairman of the Regional Ambulance Committee, formed out of the shared-services group, it's about making sure that when someone needs medical attention, they get it.

And right away.

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