

Town of Salina ends lost-cost ambulance service



Published: 1/13 9:56 pm

Updated: 1/14 12:19 am

Town of Salina (WSYR-TV) - The Town of Salina has eliminated its ambulance service, which covered some of the cost of ambulance rides for residents. Patients will now be responsible for their own co-pays and deductibles when they require an ambulance.

Salina was the only town in Onondaga County to offer a service to help cover the costs of ambulance services, but Town Supervisor Mark Nicotra says they've wanted to abolish it for some time. "We're trying to get out of a business we shouldn't be in," he said.

The Town had deals with both the North Area Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Rural Metro.

Supervisor Nicotra says the Town was covering whatever fees insurance companies, Medicaid or Medicare wouldn't cover for over twenty years. The original impetus for the agreement was to guarantee ambulance coverage when the fire departments got out of the business. "Now there are several ambulance companies that can serve anywhere in the County, so now we don't need a formal agreement," Nicotra said.

For a Town of Salina Medicare recipient, the change means they will need to pay \$30 to \$120 for an ambulance trip that would have been free in the past.

Rural Metro Division Manager Mike Addario says the altered agreement will only change the system of compensation. It won't change the way they operate within the Town. "We still have a vehicle in the Town of Salina stationed at the Liverpool firehouse," he said. "I think what you saw was the entire town that was really only needed by a few individuals. And I think in this day-in-age most people understand the concept of having a co-pay and a deductible."

"It's just us getting rid of being the payee of last resort. When you dial 911, you're still going to be getting an ambulance and that's one thing we want to be clear about when we went through this," said Nicotra.

The total savings for the Town could add up to about \$81,000 per year, or between \$3 and \$4 on the average taxpayer's bill.

Copyright 2011 Newport Television LLC All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.