



City of Fort Worth MedStar/EMS Transition At-A-Glance



In 2023, the City recognized the rising costs and increased response times of EMS delivery and the stagnant revenues affecting the MedStar EMS delivery model. The City began an examination into solutions to ensure the long-term viability, stability, efficiency, and success of the EMS system that serves Fort Worth and other member cities. In May 2024, the Fort Worth City Council approved the EMS Ad Hoc Committees recommendations, which included establishing an EMS system within the Fort Worth Fire Department. This will ensure that the EMS system for residents and visitors is financially sustainable, responsive, timely and focused on high-quality patient care.

FORT WORTH FIRE EMS

Frequently Asked Questions

When someone calls 911, there must, and will be, high-quality patient care sent to help, always. In the past year, the issue at hand has been sustainable funding and continuing to deliver a high-quality Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system to the City of Fort Worth and surrounding areas. Please take time to read through some of the most frequently asked questions.

• ***What does success look like?*** Success is a long-term, financially sustainable EMS model that provides quality care for patients for years to come.

• ***How is the Fort Worth Fire Department working with MedStar and how could this affect the department?*** Since 1986, the Fort Worth Fire Department and MedStar have shared the common mission of providing the highest level of care that is in patients' best interests. The Fire Department regularly works with MedStar and remains committed to providing a high level of service to the community. Their crews work closely together daily.

• ***How long has the MedStar Board been discussing fiscal issues and alternatives?*** Since 2019, MedStar's leadership team, in collaboration with their Board of Directors, took steps to prevent, or at least delay, the opportunity for expenses to exceed revenue. At the time, the financial challenges MedStar faced were anticipated to take place further in the future, and MedStar leadership and the Board of Directors kept member cities aware of the challenges that seemed to lie ahead.

• ***How much does the City of Fort Worth contribute to subsidizing MedStar?*** Since 2009, the City of Fort Worth, along with other MedStar member cities, has not needed to contribute any financial support to MedStar. MedStar has supported itself through fees from health insurance and government programs like Medicare and Medicaid. The COVID-19 pandemic caused extreme decreases in MedStar revenue and other health care organizations such as hospitals and clinical practices. In 2020 and 2021, MedStar requested federal CARES Act funding through its member cities. The City of Fort Worth allocated a one-time payment of \$606,400 in federal CARES Act dollars to MedStar in addition to other member cities collectively providing \$20,000 of additional CARES Act funding.

• ***How did MedStar operate without City funding?*** MedStar utilized reimbursement from private and government insurers, like Medicare and Medicaid, for the services provided. Because of that third-party funding, member public agencies had not supported MedStar financially since 2009. A third-party cost

reporting firm confirmed that MedStar had been the lowest cost provider in Texas from 2012 through the most recent cost report in 2022.

• ***Is MedStar a private contractor?*** No. The City of Fort Worth and its member cities created MedStar as a public utility model, under the direction of the Metropolitan Area Emergency Medical Services Authority. As the Authority's largest customer, Fort Worth accounts for 90 percent of the Authority's call volume and is represented by five of the nine seats on its board of directors.

• ***Are other cities experiencing similar issues with EMS?*** The declining financial status of EMS systems is an issue across the country, forcing many municipalities to evaluate their models. According to themunicipal.com, "The EMS system is under pressure from various sources and faces significant change in the coming years. EMS agencies face financial pressure from increasing costs coupled with flat or decreasing reimbursement; difficulties in recruiting and retaining personnel to staff ambulances, all coupled with an aging population and increasing number of calls."

• ***What steps has the MedStar Board and management taken?*** The priority remained in meeting MedStar's core mission of providing exemplary, quality, efficient patient care with the highest quality people.

- In October 2020, MedStar's Board and management supported communication, and adoption, of the first increase in fee schedule in over 10 years, which was implemented in February 2021 resulting in \$3 million of additional revenue.
- MedStar's Clinical Department was integrated into the Office of the Medical Director (OMD) in 2015, moving three coordinator positions to OMD. No positions were eliminated in the merger, but reduced training time by approximately 50%.
- MedStar's Training Academy was integrated into OMD in Spring 2020, moving one coordinator and one administrative position. A manager position and instructor position were eliminated, saving \$200,000 per year.
- In 2019 and 2020, outsourced building and stretcher maintenance resulted in an annual savings of \$100,000 per year.
- Evaluated contractual opportunities for better pricing through consolidating vendors or purchasing from different vendors.
- Outsourced most of the billing functions which reduced headcount and increased collections in 2021 and 2022.
- In 2020 and 2021, MedStar requested \$700,000 of CARES federal funding allocations from member cities to offset anticipated lost revenue associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Actual lost revenue was over \$1.7 million.

- Eliminated three positions in 2023 and outsourced and redistributed responsibilities resulting in anticipated savings of \$100,000 in 2024.
- Transitioning from diesel to gas ambulances in 2023 and 2024 estimated a \$500,000-\$750,000 savings upon full implementation.
- Worked with the state and federal legislators to pilot a program that pays for services rendered in the home, which was uncompensated before this change.
- MedStar leadership and board continued to work diligently to find cost savings while maintaining service levels.



If you're interested in learning more about the EMS transition, please visit [MedStar/EMS – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth](#).

Submit Your Stories

The *Community Corner* is all about celebrating the people and accomplishments that make our neighborhoods special, and we want your input! Do you know an outstanding neighbor who goes above and beyond? Has your neighborhood achieved something worth sharing, whether it's a new community project, a successful event, or a positive initiative that brought residents together?

We'd love to spotlight these stories in upcoming editions of the newsletter, so others across the city can be inspired by your experiences. Whether big or small, every story has the potential to make a difference in another neighborhood!

You can email us at engagement@fortworthtexas.gov with a short description and any photos you'd like to include.

Let's celebrate the spirit of community that makes Fort Worth such a great place to live!

About Us

The Community Engagement Office connects neighbors, educators, and community leaders with city services and each other. We provide educational programs for students and adults regarding city services and training programs for community building. For more information, find your Liaison or contact us at the office:

- Phone – 817-392-6201
- Email – Engagement@FortWorthTexas.gov
- Website – [Community Engagement](#)



