



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*LifeCare Ambulance CEO Ron Slagell answers lawmakers' questions at May's Legislative Q&A.*

## Improving Care to Residents is the Focal Point at the LifeCare Ambulance Legislative Q&A.

**Battle Creek, Mich. (June 16, 2017)** – LifeCare Ambulance Service hosted a timely Q&A session with lawmakers in Battle Creek on Friday, May 19, 2017. Attendees included Sen. Mike Nofs (R- Battle Creek), and State Reps. John Bizon (R-Battle Creek) and Eric Leutheuser (R-Hillsdale). Also in attendance were Sherry Sofia, legislative director for Rep. David Maturen (R-Vicksburg), and Nate Henschel, legislative director for Sen. Margaret O'Brien (R-Portage), as well as LifeCare management and board members, and Angela Madden, executive director of the Michigan Association of Ambulance Services.

“We achieved our goal – to bring lawmakers and EMS officials together for a brainstorming session on improving vital emergency response services,” says LifeCare Ambulance CEO, Ron Slagell. “Most striking was the open dialogue on issues relating to our work. Open conversations

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are the best way to improve the challenges faced in providing emergency medical care to area residents today and into the future."

### Lawmakers show support for LifeCare Ambulance.



< Rep. Eric Leutheuser (left) and LifeCare Operations Manager Tim Miner in discussion.  
 ^ L-R, Rep. John Bizon, LifeCare Operations Director Steve Frisbie and Shery Sofia, Legislative Director for Rep. Maturen.

"LifeCare Ambulance is a great resource to Southwest Michigan that we absolutely could not do without," reflects Bizon. "The emergency responders are heroes in my mind, as every day they are the difference between someone living and tragedy happening. It is encouraging to know that the organization

is taking the lead on continually growing, being educated, educating the public, and keeping Southwest Michigan safe."

"We are also seeing a shortage of paramedics, and that's a very real problem for society," adds Henschel. "We need to find a way to fill the void and encourage young people to consider this as a career option early on. These emergency services are a critical need, and we sincerely appreciate those who provide this life-saving service on our behalf."

However, there are ways to enhance and extend services to more people, stresses Slagell. "If we can explore new opportunities for delivering care, such as the community paramedic concept, we can enhance the service and care patients receive while reducing health care costs." The concept is a growing trend, he explains, consisting of EMS professionals taking on expanded roles or providing more follow-up care to patients, particularly those in underserved or rural areas.



[L-R] Sen. Mike Nofs, LifeCare CEO Ron Slagell and MAAS Executive Director Angela Madden.

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### **Takeaways for the Community:**

- 1) LifeCare Ambulance is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization and a regional provider for seven counties in southern Michigan, covering 212,000 residents and over 1,430 square miles (much of it rural).
- 2) It is one of only 160 accredited agencies out of the 13,000 services in the U.S.
- 3) Safety is key for patients and employees. The monitoring of quality and performance improvement is an important aspect to the services provided by LifeCare.
- 4) There is a shortage of EMTs and paramedics in Michigan and nationwide. EMS positions are considered one of the ten most dangerous jobs but also in the lowest 20 percent of pay in the health care sector.
- 5) Expanded Medicaid has decreased uncompensated care to Michigan ambulance services, and commercial health or auto insurance are primary payers of ambulance trips in 15 percent of the calls.
- 6) Mobile Integrated Health Care (or Community Paramedicine) is an emerging trend in EMS.
- 7) LifeCare is committed to the community and gives back in numerous ways.

Slagell and his team look forward to keeping in touch with lawmakers and hosting future educational events. “We believe these meetings are extremely valuable, especially as legislators are elected to new terms or new persons are elected to state office.”

### **About LifeCare Ambulance Service**

*Since 1983, LifeCare Ambulance Service has served as the 9-1-1 response provider for seven Southcentral Michigan counties covering 1,400 square miles, including Battle Creek, Coldwater, Sturgis, Mendon, Cassopolis and surrounding areas. Upholding the highest standards of advanced life support services found anywhere in the country, LifeCare is proud of the bond it has formed with the medical community and area residents. It is also accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Learn more at <http://lifecareems.org/>.*

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