

Harris EMS has provided 911 service for Jackson County since January 1st, 1996. In this time the service has grown from a single 24-hour ambulance, and a back-up on-call crew, to now having three 24-hour ambulances, a 12-hour ambulance, and a 12-hour supervisor, that operates a quick response vehicle. The Harris EMS response area covers all areas of the county from the Thorpe Power Plant, north, with the exception of the area within the Cherokee Reservation. In addition to providing 911 service, Harris EMS also provides interfacility transports from Harris Regional Hospital to tertiary care facilities.

We currently operate three bases that are strategically located throughout our service area, and are staffed 24-hours per day. Base one is located at Harris Regional Hospital. It houses a 24-hour ambulance, as well as a 12-hour ambulance, and the 12-hour supervisor in the quick response vehicle. Base two is currently located at the Jackson County Rescue Building off Highway 116, and houses a 24-hour ambulance. Base three is located on Highway 441, north of the Qualla Fire District, and houses a 24-hour ambulance. In 2020 Harris EMS ran 6,708 calls, which was our busiest year ever. We continue to see increasing call volumes, year-over-year. August 2021 was our busiest month to date where ran 697 calls.

Harris EMS works with many community partners, during special events, throughout each year, to provide emergency stand-by coverage. We provide a crew for all local football games, and many other community events. We have worked with Jackson County Health Department to help vaccinate our community, through drive thru clinics, and also by delivering home vaccines to those who are unable to leave their home. Each year we teach several CPR courses within the community, and are involved with other many other community outreach activities. Harris EMS also provides continuing education to the fire departments within our service area. These classes include training for the administration and use of the medication Narcan, which we provide the medication and needed medical supplies for the first responder program.

We at Harris EMS, continually look for ways to improve the care that we provide to our community. We review and update our treatment protocols on a yearly basis, looking for opportunities to expand and improve the care that we currently provide. Working with Harris Regional Hospital, we have access to information on evidence-based medicine, which helps us improve our overall quality of care. We are active members of the Patient and Safety Clinical Quality Committee within the hospital, where we present data that we track quarterly, and garner feedback from the committee on areas for improvement.

At Harris EMS, we strive to provide the most efficient, highest-quality care possible to the communities that we serve. We achieve this through working with Harris Regional Hospital and our community partners. Our operation is centered around our mission of making communities healthier, which is a sentiment that we keep at the forefront of all we do.

Recruitment and Retention Raise 2021

Here at Harris EMS we have lost 19 full time employees in the past year. The total lost years of experience is conservatively over 80 years. Most of these employees are employed with county-based EMS services. The others are with a private service that will pay at minimum the insurance for the employee. The reason that most have given when they leave our service to go to a county-based service or other private services is benefits and retirement. These include the health insurance that is paid for by the employer, as well as a 30-year pension retirement.

Government benefits are extremely difficult to compete with and because of this in 2015 Harris EMS raised its starting paramedic pay by 8% to offset the cost of benefits as well as other paid holidays and retirement that county-based services are offering. When this was done in 2015 this seemed to help us with recruitment and retention. However, now the other services have caught up in the pay and are also offering the county government benefits which are better than those offered by our Company.

The current schedule that EMS works is a 24/72 schedule. With this schedule during a 28 day cycle an employee works 144 regular hours and 24 overtime hours. The current starting pay per hour is \$17.44 for a Paramedic, the current yearly salary is \$40,809.60 per year. We are proposing a \$1.76 increase to the base rate while also bringing current employees' salaries to the correct penetration rate given the new base rate. Under the proposed rates, starting annual salary will be \$44,928.00.

In addition to the rate increases, Harris EMS is proposing to implement a Clinical Ladder / Step Up Program in which team members can earn an hourly differential of \$0.75 / hour dependent upon meeting specified guidelines of the program. These guidelines include obtaining additional Continuing Education Units (CEUs), advanced certifications, etc. The estimated maximum impact of this program would be \$18,515 / year over the next 2 years.

We believe making these adjustments will have the effect it did in 2015, which was to decrease turnover and retain experienced staff who have been loyal to our service and the County.

The following table presents a summary of the aggregate annual cost increase.

Position Description	# of EE	Avg YOE	Pay Rate (Avg)	New Pay Rate (Avg)	Average of Std Hours	Rate Incr	Avg Annual Impact
Community Paramedic	1	4.3	\$ 18.82	\$ 21.88	80.0	\$ 3.06	\$ 6,365
EMS Crew Leader	2	22.2	\$ 23.79	\$ 27.04	80.0	\$ 3.24	\$ 13,498
EMS Field Training Officer	4	11.5	\$ 20.27	\$ 25.11	80.0	\$ 4.84	\$ 40,247
EMS Operations Coord	1	15.0	\$ 28.19	\$ 32.94	80.0	\$ 4.75	\$ 9,887
EMT	1	0.8	\$ 11.24	\$ 14.96	80.0	\$ 3.72	\$ 7,733
Paramedic	20	7.1	\$ 18.54	\$ 21.94	80.0	\$ 3.40	\$ 141,446
Grand Total	29	8.7	\$ 19.23	\$ 22.86	80.0	\$ 3.63	\$ 219,175

Harris EMS appreciates your time and consideration for this project. Any questions that you may have please do not hesitate to contact Matthew Burrell, EMS Manager at 828-506-1870.