

History

Hospital closure in rural areas has directly effected the amount of resources able to be provided to residents served in those communities. Limitation in resources such as EMS/EMT services leads to an increase in difficulty when it comes to providing adequate patient care. The longer the stay awaiting transport to higher levels of care directly effects the patient.

As of July, 2019, the total population of McKean County was 40,625 people. The population of Bradford, Pa., was 8,355 as of 2019 and the total population of Kane Pa., was 3,507. Currently there are 7 available EMS Units in McKean County for 911 Emergency calls. This includes MA1/1A/1B (Bradford City), MA3 (Port Allegheny), MA5 (Kane), MA10 (Mt. Jewett), MA16 (Smethport), MA17 (Smethport), and MA27 (Bradford). All together there are 7 different available EMS services which are to provide for 40,625 individuals in McKean County.



Supporting Organizations

Rural EMS support is provided through McKean County EMS groups. This includes a direct affiliate with the McKean County Department of Emergency Services (Nathan Burgett), direct affiliate with Emergycare (Phil Wilson), as well as those directly involves in patient care including nurses, administration, and care affiliates working with UMPC Kane and Bradford Regional Medical Center.

NREMT (National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians), Daniel Robinson, had also reached out to aid in providing information and support to such a cause.

The ANA, which is composed of over 4 million nurses, expresses their support for EMS crews and services.

ANA, "ANA believes that every patient deserves access to safe, quality care from all healthcare providers." (ANA, Pg. 1, 2014).

Political Issue

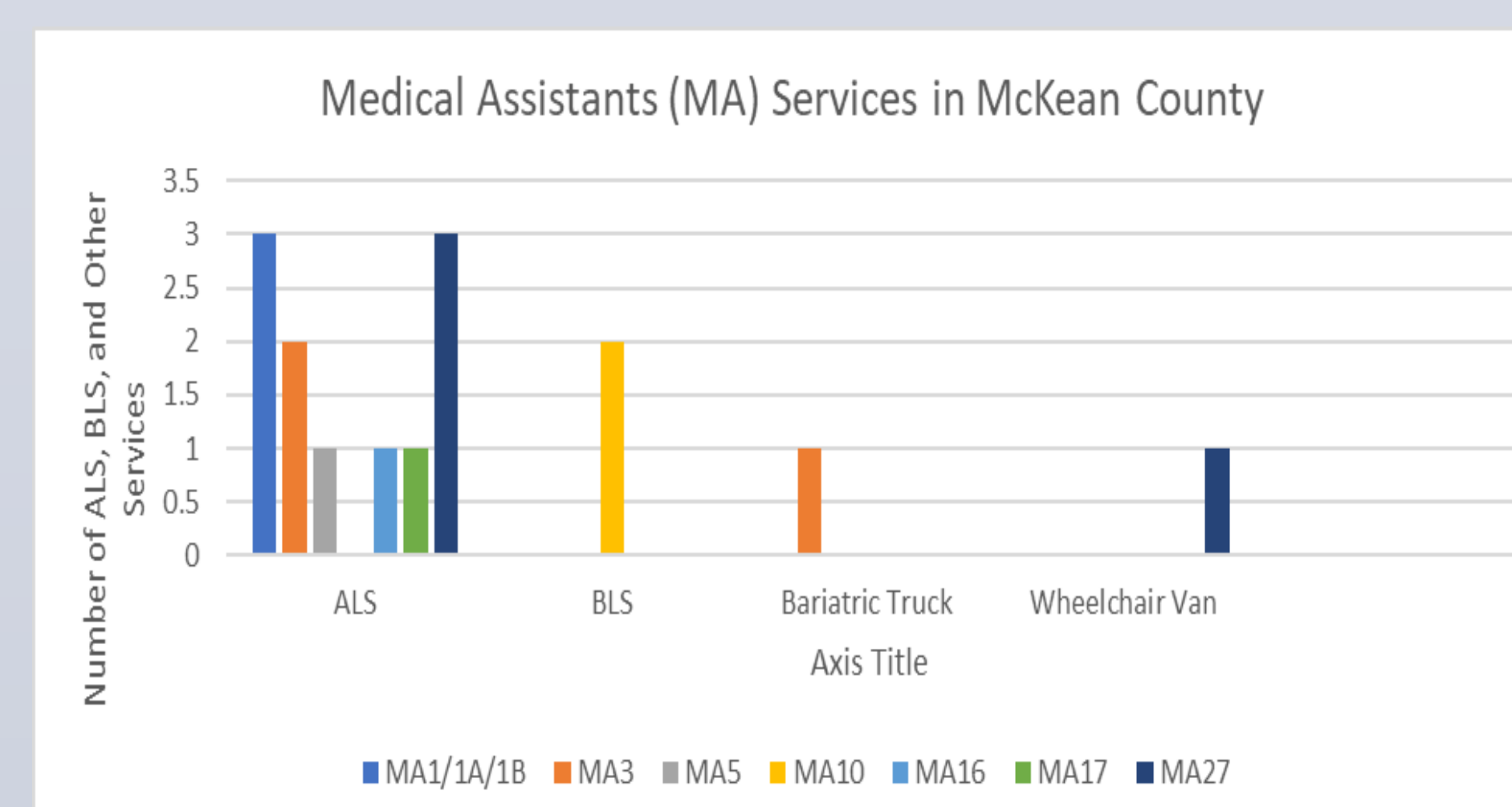
Having limited EMS/EMT services in rural McKean County and decreased availability of resources in McKean County poses a threat to patient health outcomes. Resources unavailable in rural hospital settings leads to an increased need to transfer patients to higher levels of care. These needed resources may be significant distances from the rural location. When including wait times for availability of EMS coverage and transport crew availability, times spent without appropriate care may lead to deterioration of patient health.

Impact on People in Rural Pennsylvania

Decreased availability of emergency medical transportation for patient's who's needs exceed what is available in rural hospital settings may lead to increase in length of stay for patients without the care they require. According to Daniel Robinson (NREMT), the approximate average wait time in the Emergency Room can be 3 hours. This does not include transfer times as the transfer of a patient is effected by distance to receiving facility and availability of transfer resources.

Total miles between UPMC Kane and the nearest level 2 trauma center is 93.9 miles (UPMC Hamot) in Erie & level 1 (UPMC Presbyterian) in Pittsburgh which is 128.4 miles away. Total miles from BRMC to Olean General Hospital (level 2) is 23.1 miles and BRMC to Buffalo General Medical Center is 79.4 miles. The distance between Olean General Hospital and Buffalo General Medical is 73.6 miles.

According to Meagan Buck, Director of Nursing at UPMC Kane, there were 304 transfers in the year 2020. Cheryl Weir, ER Manager at BRMC states that approximately 18-20 patients are transferred every month. This can add up to approximately 240 transfers every year.



Impact on Students and Professional Nurses

Keeping patient's in an environment with resources which are not directly available to provide necessary care poses a significant issue for registered nurses. All members of the healthcare team work to provide the best care to patients. Frustration exists when patients must wait long periods of time for transport to higher levels of care because access to transport is unavailable or delayed in rural areas. This poses a great amount of stress to the patient and the nurse. Patient care is the top priority for all nurses, and not having the ability to provide appropriate care needs to patient who may deteriorate, can have-negative outcomes for both the patient, as well as the nurse and members of the healthcare team.

My Proposal to Improve the Situation

I am proposing an increase in EMS/EMT services in rural Pennsylvania (McKean County). This will increase the ability for patients to reach necessary health resources which may be unavailable in rural areas. In turn, this will have a greater impact on patient outcomes.

Addressing this proposal will increase availability of transportation for patients who need resources from hospitals with specialty care which many rural hospitals in McKean County do not have. The transfer process will then be shortened due to increase EMS/EMT availability, and in turn decrease the likelihood of adverse patient outcomes related to lack of necessary resources.

Joint Commission Quality & Safety

"In 2014, The Joint Commission's Office of Quality and Safety analyzed 73 sentinel events that were the result of delays in treatment; 48 of these events resulted in death of the patient" (The Joint Commission, Pg. 2014).



Legislator

State Representative Martin Causer, 67th Legislative District in Pennsylvania House of Representatives



"With the number of volunteer first responders rapidly declining in rural communities across the state, one of the most important things we can do to help is make sure people who want to serve can afford the necessary training to do so," Causer said. "EMT class costs are approaching \$1,000, which is a lot to ask of someone who wants to volunteer his or her time to serve their community." - Rep. Martin Causer

Rep. Martin Causer on his bill to help make EMS training more accessible and affordable in rural Pennsylvania.

"House Bill 1838 would make training more affordable by increasing funding for the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund (EMSOF) and requiring at least 30% of the funding to be used to provide training to underserved rural areas. In addition, the bill would require no less than 10% of the funds to be provided directly to EMS providers to help with purchasing medical equipment for their ambulances." (Causer, M. Pg. 1, 2020).

During a meeting with Rep. Martin Causer on March 23, 2021, he was very quick to respond to the timely issue at hand. He spoke of Amended Act 37, which he has already put forth aiding in support of increasing funds to EMS/EMT services. Additionally he spoke of how the recent closure of services within the County would create increased need for EMS and inter-facility transfers across McKean County. He seemed very committed to the issue and discussed a need for more EMT training classes as one solution which he has already proposed.

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