Lakes Region

EMS

YOUR COMMUNITY AMBULANCE SERVICE



2023

ANNUAL REPORT





Executive Director's Report

Aarron Reinert, MA, NRP
Executive Director

Lakes Region EMS

FOUR PILLARS

+ **State-of-the-Art Patient Care**
+ **Outstanding Customer Service**
+ **Dedication to the Communities We Serve**
+ **Financial Health and Responsibility**



2023 saw our world emerge from a worldwide pandemic. On the other side of the pandemic, we continued to see shortages, supply chain challenges, and a national crisis in finding and keeping talented frontline responders. Not surprisingly, the Lakes Region EMS team, with our incredible workforce, navigated these challenges with style and grace. Throughout the year, we made significant advances in our four pillars while continuing to invest in our three most important assets: our staff, our patients, and our communities. Never could we have imagined the challenges COVID brought and continues to bring; however, I could not be prouder of how the Lakes Region EMS team has never once failed to live its four pillars while serving our communities.

As I think about 2024 and beyond, it's hard not to focus on the double-digit increases in expenses and the sometimes-double-digit decreases in reimbursement. The No Surprises Act, and its possible effect on our organization, is an example of something we need to think deeply about, specifically how it might affect our ability to provide critical care emergency medical services to our communities. To understand the No Surprises Act and how it might affect Lakes Region EMS, imagine you find yourself hospitalized. If the situation allowed, you would likely request to be taken to a hospital that is part of your system of care and is covered by your insurance. Once you or your loved one is healthy and back home, you know that a bill will follow, but you say to yourself, "It's covered under my insurance. The bill should only be the deductible allowed by my insurance." However, when you open the bill, you find some specialist or specialized service was not part of your network, resulting in a "surprise bill."

In 2022, Congress passed the No Surprises Act with the intention of ensuring that patients generally do not receive a "surprise bill." Broadly, the bill requires healthcare providers to accept what insurance pays, minus any deductibles, as payment in full for services. To accomplish this, it requires healthcare providers to contract with insurance companies to ensure they are part of the commercial insurance network. While the concept seems reasonable, the law has had significant consequences for healthcare providers. For Lakes Region EMS, it could have a marked decrease in our revenue, jeopardizing our ability to provide emergency medical services throughout East Central Minnesota and Western Wisconsin.

The real surprise of the No Suprises Act is that it does not provide a mechanism to require insurance companies to pay the real costs of providing care. It does not provide a tool for a small organization, such as Lakes Region EMS, to successfully negotiate with a multi-million or multi-billion-dollar healthcare insurance provider. And it does not appear to expect healthcare insurance companies to use the premiums paid by our shared customers to pay for their healthcare needs, such as an ambulance bill. For these reasons, and many more, ground ambulance services were exempt from the No Surprises Act. This will likely change in the future.

Today, Lakes Region EMS is solely funded by the revenue we receive from ambulance transports. We do not receive any other revenue, such as other public service organizations do, including fire departments and law enforcement. For every dollar billed today, Lakes Region EMS only receives $0.30 on the dollar. Reducing this reimbursement lower as a result of the No Surprises Act could make it near impossible to provide the services and level of care our customers and communities have grown accustomed to and expect from us.

Despite these grave concerns about the impact of federal legislation, such as the No Surprises Act, I continue to be optimistic about the organization's future. Every day, members of our organization run toward danger when others run from it. They provide lifesaving care at the patient's side. They bring modern medicine to where the patient is located rather than when they arrive at the hospital. They hold a hand, give a hug, and share a tear, which are just as important as our leading clinical care.

President Kennedy once said, we do these things "not because they are easy, but because they are hard." Lakes Region EMS and our nearly 100 employees will navigate these difficult waters in front of us because we can. We never forget our commitment to our four pillars, our patients, and our communities.



Aarron Reinert
Executive Director





Chris Ward, M.D.
Medical Director

Medical Director Report

As 2023 comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on a year that was not only productive, but also transformative. As medical director, my commitment has always been to support our dedicated crews in delivering the highest quality patient care every day, including addressing complex critical needs with utmost proficiency and offering compassionate support — such as holding someone's hand during their most vulnerable moments. It is this spectrum of care that defines us and our mission.

We've embraced the philosophy that continuous improvement is key to excellence in healthcare. One powerful method of learning is through rigorous analysis of our previous patient interactions. This not only helps us understand our strengths, but also illuminates areas where we can evolve. This year, we've made significant strides in integrating new technology to automate aspects of chart review. This innovation enables us to gain deeper insights into our day-to-day care practices.

With advanced data analysis, we are now better equipped to track our performance, allowing us to benchmark our success and identify areas for growth. A critical aspect of this is monitoring skills and procedures that are used less frequently. It is vital that every member of our team has the knowledge and confidence to perform at their highest level, especially in the challenging environment of pre-hospital EMS. Therefore, ensuring that our team members are proficient in even the most infrequently used procedures has been a priority.

This focus on data-driven insights has been instrumental in shaping our educational initiatives. By understanding the specific needs of our team, we can tailor our training programs to be more relevant and impactful. This approach ensures that we're not just providing education, but the right education, to the right people, at the right time.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are excited to continue this journey of excellence in patient care. We will explore further advancements in technology and training methodologies to ensure that our team remains at the forefront of pre-hospital medical care.

I want to express my profound gratitude to every member of our team for their dedication, skill and compassion. It is their unwavering commitment to our patients that makes us who we are. I am proud to lead such an exceptional group of healthcare professionals and look forward to what we will achieve together in the coming year.

Thank you,

Chris Ward, M.D.
Medical Director

PILLAR ONE

State-of-the-Art Patient Care

Clinical Development Introduction

In 2023, the Lakes Region EMS clinical department embraced a new ethos, intertwining the foundational principles of "tools to do the job" and "curious, not judgmental" with our Quality Assurance and Improvement initiatives. This strategic fusion aimed at elevating our documentation and data analysis practices solidified our areas of expertise and illuminated pathways for further enhancement. This integrative approach has significantly refined our charting processes, propelled educational efforts, and broadened the knowledge base across our entire team.

Clinical Department Changes

In October, our team bid farewell to Darin Wendel, our director of clinical services. During his tenure, Darin played a pivotal role in shaping the direction and ethos of the clinical department, including strengthening interpersonal relationships and solidifying a framework for ongoing progress within our team.

Darin's leadership was instrumental in fostering a collaborative environment, where ideas flourished and innovation was encouraged. His ability to connect with each team member helped in cultivating a sense of unity and purpose. Under his guidance, the clinical department achieved numerous milestones and set new standards in patient care and service delivery. Moving into 2024, we will continue strengthening our work in these areas.

Clinician Development and Education

Allocating sufficient time to comprehensively educate our paramedics and EMTs across their diverse functional areas remains a challenging endeavor. Our curriculum spans a broad spectrum, covering essential topics from Basic Life Support to Advanced Critical Care Medicine. To address this, we've implemented a thorough onboarding educational program for every new recruit, encompassing training in equipment usage, skill development, medical knowledge, and the requisite level of patient care. This year, we conducted four intensive new-hire training sessions alongside our ongoing "Essentials of Critical Care" course, ensuring our providers are thoroughly prepared to handle the complex needs of critically ill and injured patients.

In addition to this, the LREMS education team has been steadfast in offering regular training sessions for all staff members. These sessions are vital for maintaining and updating our staff's knowledge, broadening their expertise, and integrating new skills and protocols. Our schedule included monthly case reviews and quarterly educational meetings, which served as platforms to introduce updated guidelines, new equipment, and resources. These meetings also revisited previous training topics, reinforcing knowledge, skill proficiency, and aligning with our operational expectations.

Feedback on our new-hire training has been overwhelmingly positive. Several notable comments from our training courses praised the balanced approach of our sessions, with one attendee saying, "I really enjoyed this session. I enjoyed learning new things and going over past subjects, such as assessments. I would like to continue to see a mix of new and continuing skills/knowledge."

Simulation

Simulation continues to be a cornerstone of clinical education within LREMS. Over the years, our approach to education has matured, leading us to develop a more holistic model that seamlessly integrates simulation exercises with traditional lecture and classroom discussions. In 2023, we enhanced our simulation capabilities with the addition of a new, advanced mannequin that interfaces with a simulation monitor. This addition represents our ongoing commitment to leveraging cutting-edge tools to enrich our training programs.

Continued Quality Assurance

In 2023, LREMS focused intently on quality assurance, with a special emphasis on enhancing feedback to our crews through enriched data collection. This initiative aimed to paint a more comprehensive picture of our crews' clinical skills. We introduced a novel quality assurance review process, ensuring that at least 20% of patient charts undergo a thorough review, as well as 100% of stroke, intubations, STEMI, and cardiac arrest calls. This approach not only allows us to meticulously evaluate calls in critical categories, but also enables us to randomly scrutinize charts across the board. This year also marked significant advancements in identifying calls that required patient

updates, leading to a noticeable increase in the quality and quantity of hospital-provided patient feedback.

Recognizing gaps at the start of the year, we intensified our efforts in data collection and educated our crew on its significance. A key development was the enhancement of our charting software. This upgrade now provides more detailed tracking capabilities, enabling us to monitor the number of charts reviewed and ensure the consistency and quality of the data we're analyzing. This move toward more objective data collection has been central to our quality assurance efforts.

Data literacy has become a fundamental aspect of our department's culture. We've initiated sharing these insights with our crews, understanding that while numbers may not always be exciting, they are crucial for benchmarking our performance against national metrics. Our dashboard now actively tracks primary metrics, our ongoing quality improvement initiatives, and the most common impressions from this quarter's calls.

We've made it a priority to share both the successes and improvement areas with our staff, focusing on individual and collective growth. Our Quality Assurance department has been particularly attentive in providing detailed assessments to the crews. Our ambitious goal for 2023 was to review 20% of all charts, and we have surpassed this target, currently reviewing approximately 24%. Also, our software now automatically flags certain calls for review, including all cardiac arrest and emergency transports. Additionally, we aim to review 20% of each provider's charts.

In our latest educational session, we presented both company-wide and individual staff data. Looking ahead to 2024, we plan to present this crucial data quarterly, continuing our commitment to transparency, improvement, and excellence in patient care.

Tools to Do Our Job

Building on our work from 2002, we kicked off 2023 by introducing Handtevy Mobile, a cutting-edge guideline app and medication reference tool. This innovative app is a game-changer, merging our guidelines with tailored medication dosages to offer our providers a singular, comprehensive resource. Not only does it assist in determining precise medication doses and equipment for each patient, but it also supports real-time documentation.

We rolled out Handtevy Mobile during multiple educational sessions, significantly enhancing our crews' proficiency, efficiency, and confidence, particularly in medication verification. The feedback from our crew has been overwhelmingly positive, with the following comments highlighting Handtevy's essential role in patient care and its integration within LREMS:

- "Handtevy will be a vital tool inpatient care from now on. Very glad to see it incorporated with LREMS now."
- "Excited for Handtevy."
- "I love what I've seen today in the Handtevy app. This will be a great tool to use with our patient interventions, and I also appreciate having our guidelines in it."

Additionally, 2023 has been a year of reinforcing and reinvigorating our previous educational content. By revisiting and presenting these materials in new and engaging ways, we've sparked dynamic discussions and significantly enhanced our providers' competencies. Our quarterly educational sessions have not only included refresher training with Handtevy, but also continued to focus on areas such as pediatric care, cardiac arrest, and other critical care skills. This approach of revisiting and practicing previously introduced techniques has proven invaluable in deepening our team's understanding and application of these essential clinical skills.

Critical Care Provider Course

We are thrilled to celebrate our second year of a fruitful partnership with FlightBridgeED, a collaboration that has been instrumental in offering our paramedics a top-tier critical care course. This year, we've been especially active, participating in three extensive rounds of critical care classes. It's exciting to report that we're on track with our ambitious goal of ensuring every paramedic undergoes critical care training and obtains certification within two years of joining our team. This initiative has been a resounding success, as evidenced by the record-breaking number of critical care certified providers in our ranks. This milestone reflects our commitment to excellence in patient care and underscores our dedication to providing our paramedics with the best possible education and training opportunities.



Arrowhead Association EMS Conference & Expo

LREMS once again demonstrated our commitment and expertise at the Arrowhead EMS Association Conference & Expo, marking another year of successful involvement in this annual event. The event, held at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth, MN, from January 19–21, served as a vibrant platform for networking, learning, and showcasing our capabilities. Participating in this event allows our organization to showcase our continued commitment to excellence and collaboration within the emergency medical services community.

With a large presence on the expo floor, LREMS, in partnership with our vehicle supplying company, Life Line Emergency Vehicles, secured a prominent corner booth. This dual-space booth allowed us to exhibit our administrative prowess and display our state-of-the-art vehicles. During the 2023 conference, we unveiled our newest supervisor vehicle, a 2022 Tahoe adorned with our distinctive graphics. The booth was more than just a display; it was an interactive hub that featured a comfortable sitting area, a bags/cornhole game station, and opportunities for attendees to engage with our crew members.

This year, we were proud to have diverse representation from our team, who were nominated to attend based on their outstanding service to the company and the communities we serve. This gesture underlines our ethos of recognizing excellence and dedication. Team members representing LREMS at the event included two supervisors, a support services associate, and four crew members. Each brought unique insights and experiences to the table.

The conference's highlights were multifaceted. Crew members had the valuable opportunity to network with various hospitals and EMS agencies across the state, fostering connections that are vital in our field. The guest speakers, specialists in diverse medical fields, provided insightful talks on subjects our crews are deeply passionate about. Sophie Voit, an LREMS crew member who stopped by the conference, summed up the experience, noting the unique learning and interaction opportunities with different services that the conference facilitated.

LREMS' participation in the Arrowhead Conference extends beyond mere attendance. It reflects our dedication to acknowledging and rewarding our staff's commitment. Overall, the conference serves as an essential venue for us to maintain and enhance our relationships with agencies and vendors that we collaborate with daily, as well as to forge new, positive connections that will propel our company forward.



Star of Life

Brandon Trauba has been an incredible asset to Lakes Region EMS over the course of his career. Starting as an EMT in 2014, Brandon quickly achieved high ranking within a short period of time, progressing from EMT to Paramedic, to Critical Care Paramedic, then on to an Operations Manager. Brandon continues to be an example of a leader; he asks difficult questions and is thoughtful but firm in how he deals with issues. He shows great ownership and engagement in the organization and has a good practice of looking at things through both a leadership lens as well the lens of a Paramedic or EMT on a truck.

In his role as an Operations Manager, Brandon has led many initiatives providing beneficial contributions and improvements to the organization. He leads the Field Training Officers group, mentoring new and experienced employees. He also assists in bringing new staff into the organization by guiding them through orientation until they are serving the community on their own. Brandon also spearheaded the rollout of an entirely new narcotics process. He worked diligently to gather feedback from all staff, worked to understand the process, and trained the organization before launching the module.

In addition to serving the communities of Lakes Region EMS, Brandon has been a member of the United States Reserves for the past 12 years. He has served our country on multiple deployments as a Flight Paramedic. Outside of work, Brandon enjoys spending his time with his four-year-old daughter and wife Justine. He also enjoys going to the family cabin in his spare time. Lakes Region EMS is proud to recognize Brandon Trauba as a 2023 Star of Life.



FRANDSEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

Helping Those in Need

Featured Story: Caring Beyond Crisis: Frandsen Family Foundation Redefines Lakes Region EMS

In the heart of the Lakes Region, a beacon of hope and care shines brightly, thanks to the transformative impact of the Frandsen Family Foundation on Lakes Region EMS (LREMS) and the broader community. This story of compassion, innovation, and community support is woven from the lives touched and saved, a narrative that speaks volumes about the Foundation's unwavering commitment to making a difference.

At the core of this impact lies Dennis Frandsen's vision and generosity. LREMS' operational culture is directly fostered by the Foundation's support, according to Operations Manager Lee Huber.

"There's a lot of people in a lot of different agencies, and this is definitely one of the most fun-loving and family-like groups," he said.

Revolutionizing EMS With Humanity and Hope

Mr. Frandsen's approach to philanthropy is centered around empowering people, the most critical resource in any organization. This philosophy has led to significant enhancements in the resources, tools, and assets available to the EMS team, thereby greatly impacting the quality of emergency services provided to the community.

"Dennis is so passionate about the single most important resource in every organization. It's the people," said Executive Director Aarron Reinert.

Mr. Frandsen's investments, seen as gifts of hope and life, have touched over 10,000 lives annually, according to Reinert's estimates. But his generosity extends far beyond mere financial assistance.

"Dennis has taught us a ton of things. One of the things he believes deeply in is doing what's right," Reinert added.

The profound impact of Mr. Frandsen's contributions is not just a testament to his kindness, but also to the collective effort of the Frandsen Family Foundation. This synergy of compassion and support has been a cornerstone in shaping the past, present, and future of LREMS, ensuring that the right decisions triumph over the easy ones, for the betterment of the community.

Beyond Funding: Cultivating a Family-Like Atmosphere at LREMS

The Frandsen Family Foundation's donations are crucial to the success and efficacy of LREMS. The contributions have transformed the organization's EMS bases into more than just workplaces, creating an environment where our staff feels valued and supported, which fosters a sense of family rarely seen in today's workplaces. The feedback from LREMS team members reveals the incredible difference this support makes:

"[Dennis] sent designers out to the bases and said it's not good enough for the crews. To know that I have a kitchen that I can cook dinner in. It's definitely a home away from home. I haven't had co-workers that felt like family like this before."

—Taylor Gildersleeve, Lakes Region EMS EMT

"It's hard to complain when you show up at work in Lindstrom or Rush City and you turn on the fireplace in the middle of winter. Knowing what Dennis has done with donations, thanks for what you do and who you are and for spreading that love and caringness to the communities around you."

—Daniel McIntosh, LREMS Critical Care Paramedic

"We have nice bases, we have nice equipment, we have nice trucks, and it's because of his generosity and his gifts. He's just so kind and grateful to us when I feel like the roles should be reversed. We should be grateful to him for allowing us to have this nice equipment and these nice bases to help the people in the community."

—Jessica Anderson, LREMS Critical Care Paramedic

The Foundation's support was also pivotal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The donation of ventilators and other equipment played a crucial role in enhancing LREMS' capability to manage the crisis effectively, according to the Critical Care team.

Saving Lives: A Human Connection

The Frandsen Family Foundation's culture of giving uplifts the EMS team and extends the organization's warmth and care to the community we serve. The lifesaving impact of LREMS, bolstered by the support of the Foundation, is vividly illustrated through a series of compelling patient stories — from Desiree and Oaklynn's harrowing experience, where LREMS' swift action saved a young life, to Rush City Mayor Dan Dahlberg's asthma attack, where our crew's assurance and competence shone through, these narratives highlight the real-life impact of the Foundation's contributions. Similarly, LREMS' response to Chisago County Sheriff Brandon Thyen's near-fatal accident and one family's traumatic mishap underscores the critical importance of a well-equipped and compassionate EMS service.

"Lakes Region was our saving grace. Oakland did not wake up in the morning. Her eyes were kind of fluttering in the back of her head, so I called 911. These guys showed up, and I can't even describe how amazing each one of them were."

—Desiree and Oaklynn

"I have asthma, and I started having an attack. We called, and they were there. The technician said, 'Don't worry, Dan, if this doesn't work, we've got 15 other things in the truck to try. So, just relax. We'll get it. We'll get your breathing down.' And they did."

—Rush City Mayor Dan Dahlberg

"I was on one of our local county roads and was struck by a vehicle. I have a very fond place for Lakes Region EMS and their response for me personally that day. It was a very serious accident. I was told I was probably lucky to live."

—Chisago County Sheriff Brandon Thyen

"We were riding dirt bikes. She had her little dirt bike too and riding around the track at Grandpa's house. Then that's when the accident happened. You don't think of them until you actually need them, and then it's really an eye opener when you do need them ... thanks Lake Region for taking care of me."

—A Local Family Shares Their Story

The Frandsen Family Foundation's impact on LREMS and the community is immeasurable. Through their unwavering support, they have not only enhanced the quality of emergency medical services, but have also fostered a culture of care, compassion, and family. Their contributions go beyond financial donations; they instill hope, help to save lives, and strengthen the fabric of the community, making Lakes Region a beacon of hope and humanity.





PILLAR TWO

Outstanding Customer Service

Over the past 20-plus years, LREMS has become a cornerstone of our community, making a profound impact through various means, not least of which is our exceptional customer service. Our unwavering commitment to serving our community at unparalleled standards is a source of immense pride for us. The key to our operational excellence lies in our ability to consistently deliver top-notch service.

By prioritizing outstanding customer service, we've forged stronger bonds with the community members we serve, boosting their trust and confidence in our capabilities and our dedicated team. This approach has been pivotal in cementing our reputation as a leader in the EMS field across the region, setting us apart as a trusted and reliable service provider.

LREMS Annual Survey

Continuing our annual practice, in 2023 our organization distributed survey cards to gauge customer satisfaction in four key areas: response time, professionalism, courtesy, and overall service quality. Since restarting this initiative in 2021, following a hiatus in 2020 due to the pandemic, we have consistently garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback from our customers.

Our survey cards reflect that customers rate our services as excellent an impressive 98% of the time. Our team is committed to maintaining these high levels of customer satisfaction, striving continuously to surpass our community's expectations for fast, compassionate, and tailored EMS service.

Our scores from 2023 patient survey cards received remained high. One of the measurements increased compared to 2022 ratings, while three remained stable. We averaged 4.86 across all metrics — the scores for each of our four core measurements (on a 5-point scale that ranged from "very poor" to "excellent") ranged from 4.65 to 4.94:

- Ambulance arrival time: **4.65**
- Professionalism of our Ambulance EMTs/Paramedics: **4.92**
- EMT/Paramedics courteous and kind: **4.94**
- Overall quality of care by Ambulance crew: **4.92**

LREMS is heartened by the outpouring of gratitude from patients who reach out to thank our EMTs and paramedics for their life-saving interventions. In 2023, this tradition of appreciation continued with the community showing their admiration for our committed and compassionate staff through thank-you notes and thoughtful gifts. This endorsement from those we serve affirms the importance of our daily work and energizes and inspires our team. It highlights how exceptional customer service is fundamental to enhancing EMS operations for both our community and our internal team members.

Top comments we received from our most recent survey:

"The EMTs were very professional, competent, and personable. I knew my wife was in good care."

"Thank you for always being there for us. We are so grateful."

"Very pleasant experience. Kind and compassionate."

"It was a long trip in the pouring rain. I felt very safe and well taken care of by these professional EMTs. The world is better because of these two men!"

"These people are gems! Take good care of them, they deserve it! All of you guys are fantastic. Thank you for taking care of my mom."

"Everyone did a great job, and I couldn't ask for anything more. Thank you all for everything you all did."

"They both were excellent. Top notch. Put me at ease."

"So thankful for this crew. They were amazing, professional, kind, explained everything, took great care of my daughter."

"Great guys with wonderful personalities. They provided exceptional care! We greatly appreciate them!"

"I am so glad I listened to their suggestion to go with them to the hospital. I definitely needed medical attention."

"They made my ride happy, kind, helpful, informed. They were wonderful!"



PILLAR THREE

Dedication to the Communities We Serve

LREMS is recognized as a premier provider of Advanced Life Support and interfacility transfer services in Chisago County, as well as parts of Isanti, Pine, and Polk counties. But our commitment extends beyond these services, as we are equally dedicated to community outreach, an endeavor integral to one of our organization's core value: "Dedication to the Communities We Serve." Our engagement in the community is well-regarded across the region, exemplified through our participation in initiatives such as Anonymous Santa, Adopt-A-Highway, and SWAT programs, along with various other local projects.

Each year brings new opportunities for us to connect with and support our community. Our Charitable Missions Committee actively seeks innovative ways to contribute to the well-being of our local residents. At the heart of LREMS lies our mission to deliver exceptional patient care, yet we strive to do more. We collaborate with community members, partners, and organizations, offering continuous health education and training. We share our educational resources, participate in local events and activities, and assist our community partners in numerous ways, thereby exceeding the traditional role of a community EMS service and truly embodying our dedication to the communities we serve.

2023 Community Event Participation:

Good Neighbor Project

The Good Neighbor Project was established with the aim of supporting individuals or families facing medical challenges. This initiative begins with the community nominating families in need. Following this, the LREMS Charitable Missions Committee evaluates these nominations. In 2023, we selected a deserving local family who was experiencing issues with their roof. Fortunately, we were able to assist them by contributing toward the purchase of necessary materials, enabling them to address and resolve their roofing issues.

Family Pathway's Chisago County Backpack Program

In 2023, LREMS continued its tradition of supporting the community by donating $3,000 to Family Pathways for the Backpack Program in Chisago County schools. This program, implemented across various schools in Chisago County, plays a crucial role in ensuring food security for hundreds of children. The impact of this initiative has been significant, with observable improvements in the behavior and attention spans of the children who participate.

Girl Scout Troops

In 2023, we had the delightful opportunity to assist numerous local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops in learning about first aid, enabling them to earn their respective badges. These young scouts also gained insights into the roles of medics and EMTs. They had the exciting experience of exploring an ambulance and asking many questions. It's always a pleasure to support our local troops and impart some knowledge along the way. Their enthusiasm and curiosity make these interactions a real joy!

Chisago County Safety Camp

In 2023, we were pleased to have three of our staff members contribute their time and expertise at a free, one-day camp focused on teaching children essential safety skills. This camp offered a variety of sessions, including bike safety, fire safety, 911 procedures, first aid, and personal safety, among others. It was open to children who had completed third, fourth, or fifth grade. This enriching experience was made possible through the collaboration of several organizations, including the Chisago County Sheriff's Office, Lakes Area Police Department, Chisago City and Lindstrom Fire Departments, Lakes Region EMS, M Health Fairview Lakes Medical Center, Xcel Energy, Chisago County Public Health, and Peterson Companies. Additionally, we provided lunch for the volunteers and juice and snacks for the attending children, ensuring everyone had a nourishing and enjoyable experience.





Anonymous Santa Program

In 2023, LREMS proudly marked our ninth year of participation in the Anonymous Santa program. This charitable initiative, established more than 30 years ago, assists families who struggle to afford holiday gifts for their children. Children eligible for the program receive $20 worth of gifts, encompassing a range of items from clothing, toys, and games to sports equipment. Additionally, they are provided with winter essentials, such as hats and mittens, along with stocking stuffers and a book. Our enthusiastic team of volunteers gathered donations across Chisago County and parts of Washington County, successfully filling two ambulances with gifts. This effort enabled us to bring holiday cheer to approximately 200 children. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the local families and businesses whose generous contributions made a significant difference in 2023.

SWAT

In 2023, the tactical EMS team from LREMS continued their vital collaboration with the Chisago County SWAT Unit, marking their 17th year of this crucial partnership. This joint effort focuses on safeguarding lives during high-risk scenarios, blending the expertise of law enforcement and emergency medical services. Over the past year, the LREMS EMS team was deployed to 13 high-stakes incidents, demonstrating their commitment to community safety. As we move into 2024, the team eagerly anticipates further cooperation with the SWAT unit, aiming to ensure the well-being of both the residents and the officers in our community.

Charitable Missions Committee

Established in 2016, the LREMS Charitable Missions Committee plays a crucial role in supporting our community by providing essential resources and engaging in charitable activities. This committee is instrumental in enhancing LREMS' community involvement through both individual assistance and broader community programs. These initiatives include food-security efforts, the Good Neighbor Project, and various other vital community endeavors. The committee actively communicates throughout the year to evaluate requests for charitable aid and allocate financial support accordingly.

In 2023, the committee approved 15 charitable requests alongside our regular commitments. These included a $3,000 contribution to the Backpack Programs in Chisago County schools and a $1,000 scholarship for a graduating senior from each of the high schools in Chisago County, namely North Branch, Chisago Lakes, and Rush City, totaling $3,000. Additionally, over $19,000 was allocated to our Paramedic Scholarship Program, demonstrating our commitment to educational support and community development.

Community Education Space

Our commitment to the communities we serve extends beyond exceptional EMS services and financial assistance programs. We are equally proud to offer educational opportunities through our community education space. Established in 2014 as a part of our "Use of Facilities" program, this initiative allows governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations to utilize our modern meeting space at no cost. The primary goal of this initiative is to provide a technologically equipped venue for in-person training and presentations.

The Community Meeting room, capable of seating approximately 80 people, and the Community Conference room, which can accommodate 16 individuals, are both equipped with internet access and presentation tools. The Community Meeting room is especially notable for its advanced presentation capabilities, including high-quality video and audio-conferencing technology, and a cutting-edge video wall capable of running up to five programs simultaneously. This educational space is not only a venue for external events, but is also actively used for our EMT-Basic courses and CPR training sessions.

School Drives/Donations

Each year, we contribute to the senior class parties of our local high schools, in addition to various sports and activity fundraisers. This year, we also had the opportunity to extend our support with a $1,000 donation to the Chisago Lakes High School's manufacturing program, Wildcat Industries. This program is undertaking a commendable project to construct 20 beds for local young people identified through surveys as sleeping on the floor. We are deeply grateful for the compassionate and generous individuals in our community and are pleased to assist in such a worthwhile cause.

Hands Only CPR & AED Training

We've had the rewarding experience of conducting Hands Only CPR and AED training sessions at several local churches within our service area. This straightforward yet vital skill is something we believe everyone should be familiar with, as it has the potential to save lives.



PILLAR FOUR

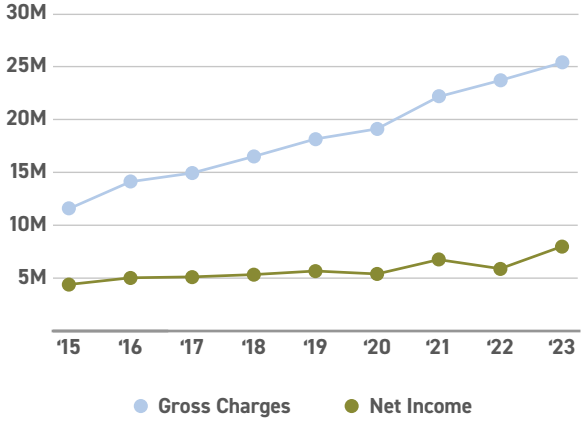
Financial Health and Responsibility

LREMS' financial stability hinges on four key areas: liquidity, solvency, profitability, and operational efficiency. As such, we conduct weekly evaluations of these elements and make adjustments whenever needed to ensure ongoing financial health.

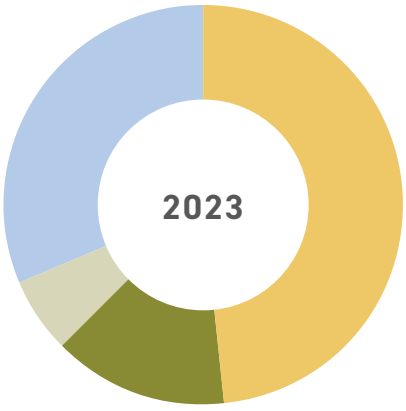
Our payor mix changed in 2023, as we saw a slight decrease in commercial payors (22.2% in 2022 to 20.6% in 2023), an increase in Medicare (51.1% in 2022, 54.5% in 2023), and a decrease in Self Pay (8.6% in 2022 to 3.3% in 2023). With the increase in Medicare, we saw a decrease in commercial payments. Despite this change, we saw a positive bottom line.

LREMS ended the year with +2% of our projected call volume and a decrease of loaded miles (113,595 in 2022 to 104,786 in 2023). In 2023, LREMS was requested 5,919 times and transported 4,306 times. We saw an overall increase to our 9-1-1 calls of 2% and a 10% decrease in our transfer volume.

To maintain our organization's success, it's crucial to monitor all of our funding and discounts allowed. For every dollar billed for services, LREMS collected approximately 30 cents after discounts to government and private payers, charity discounts, and bad debts. Net patient revenue is then utilized to cover all of our expenses.

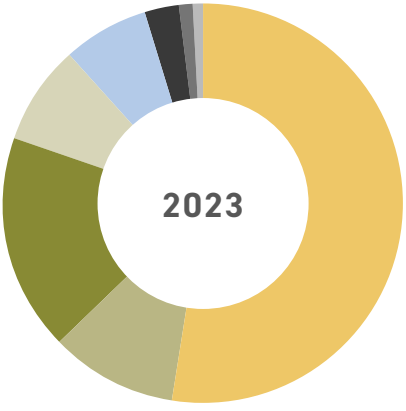






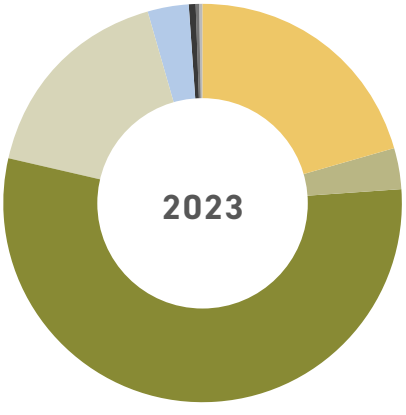
EXPENSES

- 48% Salaries and Wages
- 14% Taxes and Benefits
- 6% Vehicles
- 31% Other



PAYORS – MONEY RECEIVED

- 52.73% Commerical
- 17.58% Government
- 10.16% Medicare
- 8.07% Medicaid
- 6.75% Self-Pay
- 2.89% Auto
- 1.19% Work Comp
- 0.63% Other



PAYORS – BILLED OUT

- 20.62% Commerical
- 3.54% Government
- 54.46% Medicare
- 17.11% MA
- 3.34% Self-Pay
- 0.44% Auto
- 0.3% Work Comp
- 0.19% Other

New Equipment

New Vehicles

In 2023, LREMS made significant additions to our vehicle fleet. We acquired three remounted ambulances and expanded our range with an innovative Tesla Model Y electric vehicle in June.

Our Tesla Model Y addition represents an exciting venture into electric vehicle usage. Equipped with standard emergency features, such as vehicle tracking, lights, sirens, and new graphics, the Tesla serves multiple purposes. Primarily, it functions as a daily vehicle for select LREMS positions, facilitating the transportation of personnel and equipment. This initiative aims to evaluate the impact of using an electric vehicle on administrative costs and operational efficiencies, particularly in non-patient transport scenarios. As a trial vehicle, it is available for all staff members, including our executive director, to familiarize themselves with its features and capabilities. Charging options include both a base charger at our facility and external quick-charging stations. A comprehensive cost analysis, comparing the Tesla with other administrative vehicles, is scheduled at its one-year service mark to assess potential savings and efficiencies.

Financially, the Tesla's acquisition cost aligns with that of our standard vehicles. The anticipated savings in routine maintenance, such as oil changes and transmission services typical of gasoline-engine vehicles, will be a focus of our evaluation. With our fleet rotation policy of four to five years, we are keen to analyze the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), considering the reduced expenses in fuel and oil for the Tesla.

Our remounted ambulances, built on the sturdy G4500 Chevy chassis, are a testament to our commitment to cost-efficiency without compromising quality. The remounting process involves fitting each new chassis with our existing patient care boxes, along with updating wiring, door handles, and any worn components. The result is a fleet of ambulances that are indistinguishable from new in terms of performance and appearance, yet offer a substantial cost saving of over 35% compared to purchasing entirely new vehicles. These ambulances also feature our updated branding, distinguished by a sleek black stripe replacing the traditional yellow, signifying our evolving identity.

Vehicle Design

LREMS consistently prioritizes design aspects in both the development and deployment of our vehicle fleet. A key aspect of this process is the integration of our established design scheme, implemented since 2020, into all vehicles, especially during the remounting process. This design scheme not only enhances the visual identity of our fleet, but also incorporates a new layout for the patient compartment. This layout is meticulously crafted to ensure the safety and flexibility for both our crew and patients, allowing for optimal positioning of crew members during operations.

This year marked the completion of our vehicle design transformation phase, with all newly added fleet vehicles reflecting these updated standards. A significant feature of our latest design is the inclusion of four-point restraints for all occupants in the patient compartment. This addition adheres to the newest federal safety standards. LREMS has been proactive in complying with these mandates, ensuring that our entire fleet meets these rigorous safety requirements.

Our commitment to vehicle design is rooted in our dedication to the safety of our team and the patients we serve. By refining our ambulance design, we aim to enhance the quality of care we provide to our community. This ongoing effort reflects our dedication to operational excellence and our role as a leader in emergency medical services.

New Vehicle Systems and Features

During 2023, we successfully integrated the FERNO iNX system to enable cot-mounted monitors, aligning it with the iNTRAXX Integrated Vehicle Component System, a key feature of our vehicle design since 2020. This enhances both the functionality and efficiency of our fleet.

Additionally, we expanded our use of the Operative IQ software program, significantly improving our fleet management capabilities. This includes the monitoring and scheduling of essential tasks such as oil changes, tire rotations, and preventative maintenance. The program has proven highly effective in refining how we oversee our fleet operations. The comprehensive nature of the software consolidates various operational aspects, including vehicle rotations, integration with our camera system for automatic mileage tracking, and streamlined daily checks. This consolidation has notably saved time for our drivers. A notable achievement from implementing IQ two years ago has been the realization of supply chain cost savings. By managing resources more effectively and reducing time spent on inventory management, we have successfully reduced stock levels and minimized shipping times.

A major advancement in 2023 within the LREMS fleet was the roll-out of the Narcotics Tracking Module within Operative IQ. This transition to a fully digital narcotics accountability process represents a significant milestone, eliminating the need for paper-based tracking or duplicate forms. We can now trace every vial of medication from delivery to usage or disposal, enhancing control and safety.

Looking forward to the next year, we plan to incorporate RFID technology into the IQ system. This advancement will enable us to track larger equipment using scanning technology, allowing our trucks to automatically recognize and account for the equipment on board, further optimizing our operational efficiency.

Finally, we are getting ready to add the First Arriving dashboard technology to our organization, with plans to implement it across all of our bases in the first quarter of 2024. This innovative technology is designed to display crucial notifications and information, seamlessly integrating 15 different systems. This integration will include access to traffic cameras, real-time truck locations, daily supervisor details, and more, enhancing our operational efficiency and situational awareness.

In-House Vehicle Maintenance Program

The installation of a 4-post pneumatic 17,000lb hoist in our maintenance shop has empowered our technicians to conduct basic vehicle maintenance internally, including tire changes. This enhancement has proven to be a beneficial investment.

With this new equipment, we are now fully equipped to manage all tire-related services on-site. This includes tire replacement, balancing, mounting, and repairs. This shift to in-house operations has resulted in substantial cost reductions and significantly decreased the downtime for vehicles. Previously, a vehicle could be out of service for a day or two; now, the turnaround time has been reduced to just one to two hours.

Looking ahead to 2024, we aim to further expand our in-house capabilities, starting with the integration of oil change services. This progression is a strategic move toward increased efficiency and self-sufficiency in our vehicle maintenance operations.

Equipment Partnership

In 2023, we transitioned to a new biomedical services provider, Agiliti Health Inc. This partnership, which became effective in August, entrusted Agiliti with the responsibility of conducting all preventative maintenance and biomedical checks on our clinical equipment. Their proactive approach ensures the reliability of our equipment, keeping us ahead of the game in operational readiness and efficiency.

Incident City | Lakes Region EMS

CITY	COUNT	PERCENT
North Branch	1,113	24.99%
Chisago City	695	15.61%
Rush City	448	10.06%
Lindstrom	418	9.39%
Franconia (Township Of)	206	4.63%
Chisago Lake (Township Of)	191	4.29%
Lent (Township Of)	135	3.03%
Wyoming	114	2.56%
North Branch (Township Of)	108	2.43%
Stacy	92	2.07%
Harris	87	1.95%
Cambridge	83	1.86%
Nessel (Township Of)	83	1.86%
Fish Lake (Township Of)	78	1.75%
Sunrise (Township Of)	75	1.68%
Center City	66	1.48%
Shafer	63	1.41%
Amador (Township Of)	49	1.10%
Forest Lake	47	1.06%
Rushseba (Township Of)	44	0.99%
Oxford (Township Of)	39	0.88%
Saint Croix Falls	27	0.61%
Shafer (Township Of)	19	0.43%
Isanti	17	0.38%
Cambridge Twp	14	0.31%
Taylors Falls	13	0.29%
Rock Creek	11	0.25%
Isanti Twp	9	0.20%
Pine City	8	0.18%
Braham	7	0.16%
Linwood Twp	7	0.16%
Athens Twp	6	0.13%
Scandia	6	0.13%
East Bethel	5	0.11%
Osceola	5	0.11%
Stanchfield Twp	5	0.11%
Bradford Twp	4	0.09%

CITY	COUNT	PERCENT
Pine City Twp	4	0.09%
Pokegama Twp	4	0.09%
Brunswick Twp	3	0.07%
Coon Rapids	3	0.07%
Mora	3	0.07%
Royalton (Township Of)	3	0.07%
Amery	2	0.04%
Blaine	2	0.04%
Cumberland	2	0.04%
Lino Lakes	2	0.04%
Spooner	2	0.04%
Vadnais Heights	2	0.04%
Apple Valley	1	0.02%
Arthur Twp	1	0.02%
Bayport	1	0.02%
Baytown (Township Of)	1	0.02%
Centuria	1	0.02%
Chisago Lake Township	1	0.02%
City Of Center City	1	0.02%
City Of Wyoming	1	0.02%
Columbia Heights	1	0.02%
Columbus	1	0.02%
Dalbo Twp	1	0.02%
Fish Lake Twp	1	0.02%
Fridley	1	0.02%
Garfield (Township Of)	1	0.02%
Hugo	1	0.02%
Minneapolis	1	0.02%
Mission Creek Twp	1	0.02%
New Brighton	1	0.02%
North Oaks	1	0.02%
Roseville	1	0.02%
Saint Peter	1	0.02%
Spring Lake Park	1	0.02%
Springvale Twp	1	0.02%
Village Of Grantsburg	1	0.02%

Transfer Origin of Calls | Lakes Region EMS

TRANSFER HOSPITAL	COUNT	AVERAGE OF DISP-ENROUTE	AVERAGE OF DISP-ARRIVE	AVERAGE OF TIME ON SCENE
M Health Fairview Lakes - Wyoming	877	14.07	28.88	20.52
St. Croix Health	293	13.59	37.88	17.35
Cambridge Medical Center	144	42.92	69.49	16.65
Osceola Medical Center	55	11.62	40.19	17
Cumberland Healthcare	38	13.05	74.06	25.05
Amery Hospital & Clinic	38	11.14	55.56	20
Burnett Medical Center- Grantsburg	29	50.34	86.68	20.46
Welia Health - Mora	28	19.04	58.57	22.58
Mercy Hospital	8	89.9	109.55	21.46
Mayo Northland - Barron	4	16.27	70.57	17.28
Spooner Health	4	10.72	98.49	37.98
Mercy Hospital - Unity Campus	3	100.52	110.69	16.87
Abbott Northwestern	3	89.49	89.5	16.35
Marshfield Medical Center- Rice Lake	2	2.6		
Onamia Clinic	2	6.67	80.45	13.01
United Hospital	2	50.09	53	16.54
St Francis Regional Medical Center - Shakopee	1	84.88	112.7	30.8
Children's Minnesota - Minneapolis	1	31.87	48.25	21.67

2023 Employees

	EMPLOYEE NAME	JOB TITLE	YEARS
	Kirk Winkelman	Critical Care Paramedic	29
	Christine Rudolph	EMT-IV Tech	27
	TenaMarie Meyer	Clinical Education Manager	23
	Aarron Reinert	Executive Director	22
	Benjamin Wasmund	Director of Operations	21
	Gerald Carlson	EMT-IV Tech	19
	Kim Ditsworth	Billing Specialist	17
	Sarah Martens	Critical Care Paramedic	17
	Jessica Keeney	Community Outreach	15
	Michelle Anderson	Director of Administration	15
	Terry Kraabel	A-EMT	14
	Doug Volin	Critical Care Paramedic	13
	Kayla Hedlund	Critical Care Paramedic	12
	John Joswiak	Critical Care Paramedic	12
	Allison Stout	QA Coordinator	12
	Brian Meyer	Supervisor	12
	Lauren Buerkle	Critical Care Paramedic	11
	Darrell Rohe	Critical Care Paramedic	10
	Nicole Hall	EMT -IV Tech	10
	Lee Huber	Operations Manager	10
	Lonna Coddington	A-EMT	9
	Linette Erickson	A-EMT	9
	Luke Hedlund	A-EMT	9
	Bruce Johnson	A-EMT	9
	Jason Anderson	Critical Care Paramedic	9
	Jessica Anderson	Critical Care Paramedic	9
	Amanda Odegaard	Critical Care Paramedic	9
*	Elliot St. Amand	Critical Care Paramedic	9
	Brandon Trauba	Operations Manager	9
*	Graham Struwe	Paramedic	9
*	Matthew Thelander	A- EMT	8
*	Charles Leary	Supervisor	8
	Joshua Brown	Critical Care Paramedic	7
*	Sara Press	Critical Care Paramedic	7
	Christopher Ward	Medical Director	7
	Dakota Mechelke	A-EMT	6
	Brandon Folsom	Critical Care Paramedic	6
	Carolyn Sundheim-Little	EMT-IV Tech	6
*	David Hoye	Maintenance Engineer	6
	Matthew Kramer	Critical Care Paramedic	5
	Royce Hsiung	EMT-IV Tech	5
	Rebekah Nilius	EMT-IV Tech	5
	Jakob Kostecki	Field Lead	4
*	Jonathan Aldrich	EMT-IV Tech	4
*	Ellie Ehrich	EMT-IV Tech	4
	Dakota Miller	EMT-IV Tech	4
	Hunter Struemke	Critical Care Paramedic	4
	Alissa Behl	Supervisor	4
*	David Freerks	EMT-IV Tech	3
	Cassandra Keocher	Human Resource Manager	3

	EMPLOYEE NAME (CONTINUED)	JOB TITLE	YEARS
	Caitlin Bjorgan	Paramedic	3
	Jeana Strelow	Admin Support Specialist	2
	Dawn Splittstoser	Administrative Assistant	2
	Haley Krehmeyer	Critical Care Paramedic	2
*	Darin Wendel	Director of Clinical Services	2
	Nicole Dodge	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Amanda Dronen	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Jonathan Ekenstedt	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Taylor Gildersleeve	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Olivia Hedlund	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Kenton Pust	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Daniel Struemke	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Jaime Szczepanski	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Carissa Zarich	EMT-IV Tech	2
	Erin Bortz	Paramedic	2
	Marc Kupka	Critical Care Paramedic	2
*	McKenzy Norgard	Paramedic	2
	Danielle Mohlin	Sr. Accountant	2
	Jennifer Hatcher	Support Service Lead	2
	Heidi McCurdy	Accounting Specialist	1
	Nicholas Eastman	Ed. Development Coordinator	1
*	Jessica Bartz	EMT-IV Tech	1
	Carter Steele	EMT-IV Tech	1
	Robert Burke	Paramedic	1
	Kenneth Hyrkas	Paramedic	1
	Whitney Schmidt	Paramedic	1
	Aaron Schneider	Paramedic	1
	Sophie Voit	Field Lead	1
+	Brianna Garner	EMT - IV Tech	0
*+	Brad Engelbrekt	EMT- IV Tech	0
+	RaeAnna Fasbender	EMT- IV Tech	0
+	Nicole Fortune	EMT- IV Tech	0
*+	Nicholas Hetchler	EMT- IV Tech	0
+	Lucas Nadeau	EMT- IV Tech	0
+	John Barnes	EMT-IV Tech	0
*	Sara Bradley	EMT-IV Tech	0
+	Hunter Lawrence	EMT-IV Tech	0
+	Kyle Meinke	EMT-IV Tech	0
*+	Grace Berthiaume	EMT-IV-Tech	0
+	Jacob Wettschreck	EMT-IV-Tech	0
+	Kellen Lagoon-Watters	IT and System Advisor	0
*+	Joshua Anderson	Paramedic	0
+	Emma Jansen	Paramedic	0
*	Nikolis Ochocki	Paramedic	0
+	Lukas Olson	Paramedic	0
+	Taylor Reece	Paramedic	0
+	Derek Schnoor	Paramedic	0
+	Colin Behl	Vehicle Service Engineer	0
+	Courtney Martin	Vehicle Service Technician	0

+ New Employee in 2023
* Employee left in 2023



Board of Directors

Keith Carlson
Board Chairman

Mike Carroll
Board Vice-Chairman

Dan Meyer
Treasurer

Brandon Thyen
Board Member

Bryan Gaffy
Board Member

Josh Howell
Board Member

Aarron Reinert
Executive Director

Michelle Anderson
Director of Administration

Ben Wasmund
Director of Operations

Darin Wendel
Director of Clinical Services

Dr. Chris Ward, M.D.
Medical Director

Jessica Keeney
Community Outreach Specialist
Board Liaison

Doug Volin
EMT-Paramedic FTO
Board Liaison

Julie (Schroeder) Johnson
Retired Board Member 6/23

Lakes Region



EMS