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Auditor General DePasquale is Fixing Fund that Helps First Responders *Applauds health secretary's effort to address audit recommendations ignored for years*

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today said his latest performance audit shows the Department of Health (DOH) continued its failure to properly oversee the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund (EMSOF) through mid-2017. However, he anticipates improvements under DOH Secretary Rachel Levine's leadership.

How it's funded

EMSOF is funded through three primary sources:

- \$10 fine on all moving traffic violations,
- \$25 fee for participants in the DUI Accelerated Rehabilitation Disposition program, and
- Other fees, fines and penalties.

Beginning this year, the fund will garner up to an additional \$2 million by receiving a portion of a 12 percent tax on the sale of fireworks.

"First responders are crucial to helping people survive accidents and illnesses," DePasquale said during a news conference at the Capitol. "This fund helps ensure that emergency vehicles are properly equipped so that when emergency medical services are called to assist someone, they can provide the best life-saving care possible at the scene."

DePasquale's latest special performance audit of the EMSOF contains four findings and 22 recommendations for improvement. It covers July 2015 through June 2017.

"Since I began auditing the EMSOF in 2014, I have been telling Department of Health officials that they are not doing enough to ensure the roughly \$12 million this fund provides annually is being handled effectively," DePasquale said. "Taxpayers deserve to know their money is being spent wisely, and it is long past time for health officials to step up and do their job administering this fund correctly."

The EMSOF provides money to 14 emergency medical service councils across the state and the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council. Its revenues totaled \$12 million in 2015-16 and \$11.3 million in 2016-17.

DePasquale said Levine, who attended the news conference with him, has begun implementing his recommendations to improve the fund's administration.

"Dr. Levine took over the helm of DOH last summer, at the end of the audit period," DePasquale said. "She has been able to start making the necessary changes to improve oversight of the EMSOF and ensure that its funds are being spent on providing updated equipment for first responders."

Fund failure

DePasquale's two previous performance audits, released in 2014 and 2015, both identified significant internal control weaknesses such as:

- DOH does not have formal policies in place to administer the fund,

- DOH failed to monitor EMS councils' financial controls or use of fund dollars, and
- DOH did not review EMS councils' annual reports, and the majority were out of compliance with regulations and grant agreements during the audit period.

"These are elementary requirements for administering this money," DePasquale said. "And I've been pointing them out for four years.

"It's good to have someone now who will take my recommendations seriously and make the necessary changes."

The audit also found that DOH failed to validate EMSOF expenditures, creating an opportunity for potential misuse of state funds.

"For the specific items we reviewed, my team found that DOH did not approve 10 percent of the regional council invoices before paying them and that 25 percent of the money paid out to service providers for equipment contained items not included in pre-approved requests," DePasquale said. "We didn't find any misuse of state funds here, but with oversight this lax, it leaves the door open for misuse to happen."

DePasquale reiterated that he is encouraged by Secretary Levine's commitment to righting how the EMSOF program is run.

"I look forward to my next audit of the fund, which I expect will show major improvement in tracking how this money is spent," DePasquale said.

The EMSOF audit report is [available online at: www.PaAuditor.gov](http://www.PaAuditor.gov).

Emergency Medical Services Providers that Receive Funding from the Dept. of Health's Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund

EMS Provider	County(ies) served
EHS Federation, Inc.	Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, York
Eastern PA EMS Council, Inc.	Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Schuylkill
EMS WEST (formerly EMMCO East, Inc.)	Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, Potter
EMS West (formerly Emergency Medical Service Institute)	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland
Southern Alleghenies EMS Council, Inc.	Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset
LTS EMS Council	Lycoming, Sullivan, Tioga
EMMCO West, Inc.	Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango, Warren
Philadelphia Regional EMS Council	Philadelphia
Chester County EMS Council	Chester
Seven Mountains EMS Council, Inc.	Centre, Clinton, Juniata, Mifflin, Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Union
EMS of Northeastern PA, Inc.	Bradford, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming
Delaware County EMS Council, Inc	Delaware
Bucks County EMS Council	Bucks
Montgomery County Emergency Medical Services	Montgomery

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Media contact: Barry Ciccocioppo, 717-787-1381