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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Essex County Emergency Services Earns National Gold Award for Cardiac and Stroke Care

ELIZABETHTOWN, NY – Essex County Emergency Services has been honored with the 2026 EMS Gold Mission: Lifeline® Achievement Award from the American Heart Association. The award was formally recognized by the Essex County Board of Supervisors during its March 30 Ways and Means Committee meeting, marking a significant milestone in the department's clinical excellence.

The Gold-level achievement follows a 2025 Mission: Lifeline® EMS Silver Award, demonstrating a sustained period of growth for the county. To reach the Gold level, the department maintained a 75% or higher adherence rate to strict performance metrics for the treatment of heart attacks and strokes, specifically focusing on rapid ECG (electrocardiogram) acquisition and early hospital notification.

This achievement coincides with the implementation of the 2026 Emergency Services Stabilization Plan, a \$1.8 million investment designed to support local emergency response through a consolidated, incentive-based model.

"The Board of Supervisors and I couldn't be more pleased with our Essex County Emergency Services employees," said County Manager Michael Mascarenas. "Their unwavering commitment to the profession is truly making a difference in our communities, and we congratulate both the staff and the entire department on receiving this prestigious award.

The Stabilization Plan is a local solution to an emergency services challenge that prioritizes both clinical excellence and fiscal responsibility. By using revenue generated primarily by visitors through the Short-Term Rental tax, we are able to provide our towns with a 2-to-1 funding match to shape their own EMS future. Earning this Gold award demonstrates that this model of community-led investment is delivering the high-quality results required to support our residents and taxpayers."

The Stabilization Plan provides a framework for towns to meet a 95% response rate while reducing the financial strain on local property owners. The plan also expands the County's Advanced Life Support (ALS) Fly Car system to 24/7 coverage, ensuring that specialized care is available as a permanent safety net across the region.

"I am incredibly proud of the dedication shown by the men and women in the field who provide life-saving care every single day," said Josh Favro, Director of the Office of Emergency Services and Fire Coordinator. "Earning this national recognition is a testament to their hard work. As we move toward a consolidated system, this data shows that our teams are meeting national benchmarks for emergency response and that we are providing them with the support they need to excel for our communities."

"The authorization of our stabilization plan was a forward-thinking response to the EMS challenges, and this award validates that effort," said Kenneth Hughes, Chairman of Public Safety and Town of Essex Supervisor. "By offering targeted support and incentivizing local solutions, we are not only strengthening emergency care, we are reinforcing the principle that a reliable emergency response is available for our residents and visitors when they need it most."

By meeting these benchmarks, Essex County responders have demonstrated a consistent and effective process for treating time-sensitive emergencies from the initial 911 call through the hospital transition.

About Mission: Lifeline

The American Heart Association's Mission: Lifeline program provides a framework for EMS agencies and hospitals to follow evidence-based treatment guidelines for heart attack and stroke patients.

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