

To: Legislative Policy Committee  
From: Rebecca Graham, Senior Legislative Advocate  
Rebecca Lambert, Municipal Issues Specialist  
Date: October 15, 2024  
Re: Public Safety & County Working Group Update

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**Attending Members:** Bob Butler, Harry Fish, Lewis Pinkham, Scott Susi, Gary McGrane, Sandra Fournier, Jeffrey Harmon, Kara George, Daniel Norwood, Rick Bronson, Adam Garland

**Staff:** Rebecca Graham; Rebecca Lambert

**Summary:** The Public Safety & County Working Group met on October 15, 2024 to brainstorm possible legislative solutions. The ideas that follow will be fully vetted during the full LPC meeting.

**Recommendations:**

Advance the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on EMS in whole and specifically:

- Advance legislation to expand billable care to on scene non-transport care that would otherwise be billable in an ER setting.
- Support greater MaineCare and advocate federally for greater insurance reimbursement for both transport and non-transport services.
- Expand and permanently fund combined EMS & Fire LoSAP program with a 10 year buy in for health coverage.
- Release and refund the Community Informed Self-Determination for EMS fund.
- Fully fund Community Paramedicine Program for all areas.

Reintroduce the bill to allow for a non-residential law enforcement training academy:

- Previously LD 673 divided report went to committee of conference, died between bodies.

Expand all LEO agency access to State funded behavioral health coordinators and reduce overreliance on property tax for county jail operations.

- The service need is more acute in rural regions and provider deserts. Poorest counties with greatest geography hardest hit.
- No off ramp for individuals in crisis beyond escalation leading to incarceration.
- Fully fund mental and behavioral health mandates on county jails.
- Fully fund at state level all medically assisted treatment options for substance use for residents in county facilities.

Balance LEO response system for communities without a contract or law enforcement agency.

- Current statute only requires Maine State Police to provide services for all communities, regardless of established agency.
- Identified need for services in rural areas outstrips current staffing complement. Loss of positions swept by legislature from 2001 until 2023 (first increase in 30+ years)
- Moral -not statutory- obligation for county policing response to communities regardless of contract or provide any LEO service in an established community including training recertifications, animal control, etc., without contract above evaluation calculation.
- Counties prohibited from establishing reserve funds making it a challenge to respond to changes in need mid-budget cycle.
- Collapse of agencies causing an increased burden on all levels.
- Group mixed between forcing communities to pay based on burden they create (and obligate county service) or investing in shared system with non-property tax.