



SCRANTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Office of the Fire Chief

To: Mark McAndrew, *City Council Vice-President*

From: Chief John J. Judge IV, *Superintendent of Fire*

Date: June 2, 2026

Subject: City of Scranton - EMS/QRS

Background

The City of Scranton is prepared to implement a Fire-Based Quick Response Service (QRS) program in coordination with our medical director and Lackawanna County 911. The Fire Department has completed all necessary training, licensing, and acquisition of medical equipment to begin providing rapid medical assistance during life-threatening emergencies.

Current Challenges

During recent discussions, Lackawanna County 911 Director Al Kearney expressed reservations regarding implementation of the QRS program. These concerns have not been clearly articulated and appear to conflict with established statewide best practices for fire-based emergency medical response.

Due Diligence and Best Practices

We have provided Mr. Kearney with detailed information demonstrating that fire-based QRS systems are widely used across Pennsylvania and have proven effective in decreasing emergency response times. Additionally, we have conducted site visits to multiple 911 centers across the state, all of which successfully dispatch fire-based QRS units for medical emergencies.

Our medical director has confirmed that the City is fully aligned with required protocols, and the Fire Department stands ready to operate under his clinical oversight.

Resources and Readiness

The Fire Department has invested in new equipment and has ensured that staff are trained and certified to respond effectively. The collective bargaining agreement supports this operational enhancement, further confirming its appropriateness within the department's responsibilities.

Path Forward

Implementing a QRS program will meaningfully improve medical response times and has the potential to save lives. To move forward, we request City Council's support in securing full cooperation from Lackawanna County 911 and facilitating coordinated implementation consistent with state-recognized best practices.