



Survey: 91% of Texas EMS Agencies Report Significant Losses Due to COVID-19

April 27, 2020 - A survey of 80 Texas emergency medical services (EMS) agencies reported that 91% of the entities suffered significant financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey, which was conducted by the Texas EMS Alliance and Texas Ambulance Association, surveyed by EMS agencies that provide both 911 service and non-emergency transports.

Sample

The two organizations conducted an online survey between April 22 through April 24, 2020, of 80 EMS agencies. The sample included a wide variety of entities that provide both 911 and non-emergency transport services to every type of Texas community, including both urban and rural settings. The EMS agencies range in size from one licensed ambulance serving a rural community to a private provider with over 300 licensed ambulances that provides 911 service to multiple communities across the state.

The Financial Effect

Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has “adversely affected the entity’s finances.” The questionnaire asked respondents to compare their revenue for the current time period versus the same time period of last year.

The seven entities indicating that it has not had an adverse effect typically consisted of rural EMS agencies. However, a number of other rural EMS agencies did indicate that the pandemic had a negative impact on their finances.

EMS Call Volume

Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a decreased call volume.

The seven entities indicating that they have not witnessed a drop in call volume typically consisted of rural EMS agencies. However, once again, many other rural EMS agencies did indicate that the pandemic has led to a decrease in call volume.

Revenue

Of the 73 entities that responded to the question about a decrease in revenue as a result of the pandemic, only five entities indicated that they have not witnessed a decrease in revenue:

- 7% of respondents = No change in revenue.
- 3% of respondents = Less than 20% decrease in revenue.
- 15% of respondents = 20% decrease in revenue.



- 27% of respondents = 30% decrease in revenue.
- 21% of respondents = 40% decrease in revenue.
- 27% of respondents = Greater than 50% decrease in revenue.

Emergency Transports

The survey asked respondents to compare their drop in emergency transports for the time period of March 1 – April 20, 2019, versus March 1 – April 20, 2020.

Of the 58 entities that provided a response:

- 29% of the respondents reported a 20% decrease in emergency transports.
- 38% of the respondents reported a 30% decrease in emergency transports.
- 7% of the respondents reported a 40% decrease in emergency transports.
- 26% of the respondents reported a 50% decrease in emergency transports.

Non-Emergency Transports

The survey also asked respondents to compare their drop in non-emergency transports for the same time period.

Of the 53 entities that provided a response:

- 23% of the respondents reported a 20% decrease in non-emergency transports.
- 25% of the respondents reported a 30% decrease in non-emergency transports.
- 23% of the respondents reported a 40% decrease in non-emergency transports.
- 30% of the respondents reported a 50% decrease in non-emergency transports.

Respondents' Comments

A number of the respondents provided comments.

Revenue will continue to decrease – Many EMS agencies are continuing to collect revenue from the first few months of 2020 when the pandemic was in place. As EMS agencies bill for the time period of the pandemic, revenue will be much lower.

Increasing expenses – Some EMS agencies indicated that they have been forced to quarantine employees due to COVID-19, which has led to higher labor costs.



In addition, one respondent indicated that the increased costs and decreased revenue will make it difficult to keep up capital costs, such as ambulances, which are necessary to respond to future disasters around Texas.

PPE shortages – A number of respondents indicated that they are facing PPE shortages. And when PPE and sanitizer is available, it tends to be higher than in the past. One EMS agencies that provides 911 service in southeast Texas indicated that it has faced \$200,000 in unbudgeted costs due to additional PPE.

The west Texas impact – A rural EMS agency that provides 911 service in west Texas indicated that the pandemic has resulted in additional costs of \$12,000 for PPE and operational supplies and \$28,000 in additional labor costs.

Texans are delaying care – One respondent indicated: “It is very hard to maintain a costly response-ready profile when standard utilization is down. People are not healthier, they just are not accessing emergency care at a standard rate. There very well may be a total wave of calls coming at a time when revenue is down and costs are up.”

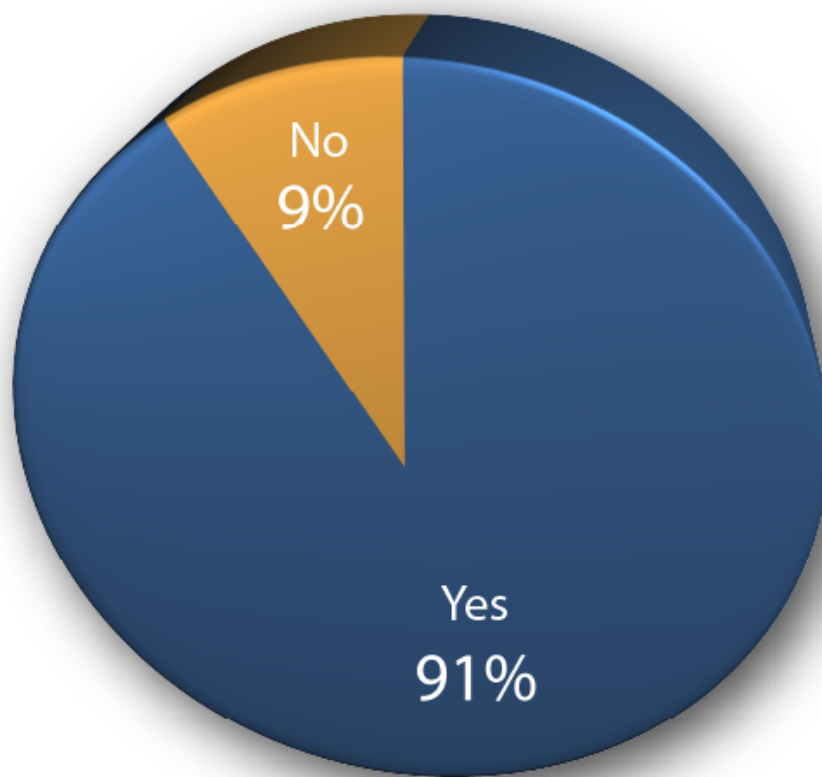
About the Texas EMS Alliance and Texas Ambulance Association

The Texas EMS Alliance was founded in 2015 as a stakeholder voice for Texas EMS agencies. Visit www.txemsa.com to learn more.

The Texas Ambulance Association was founded in 1981 as a stakeholder voice for Texas EMS agencies. Visit www.txamb.com to learn more.

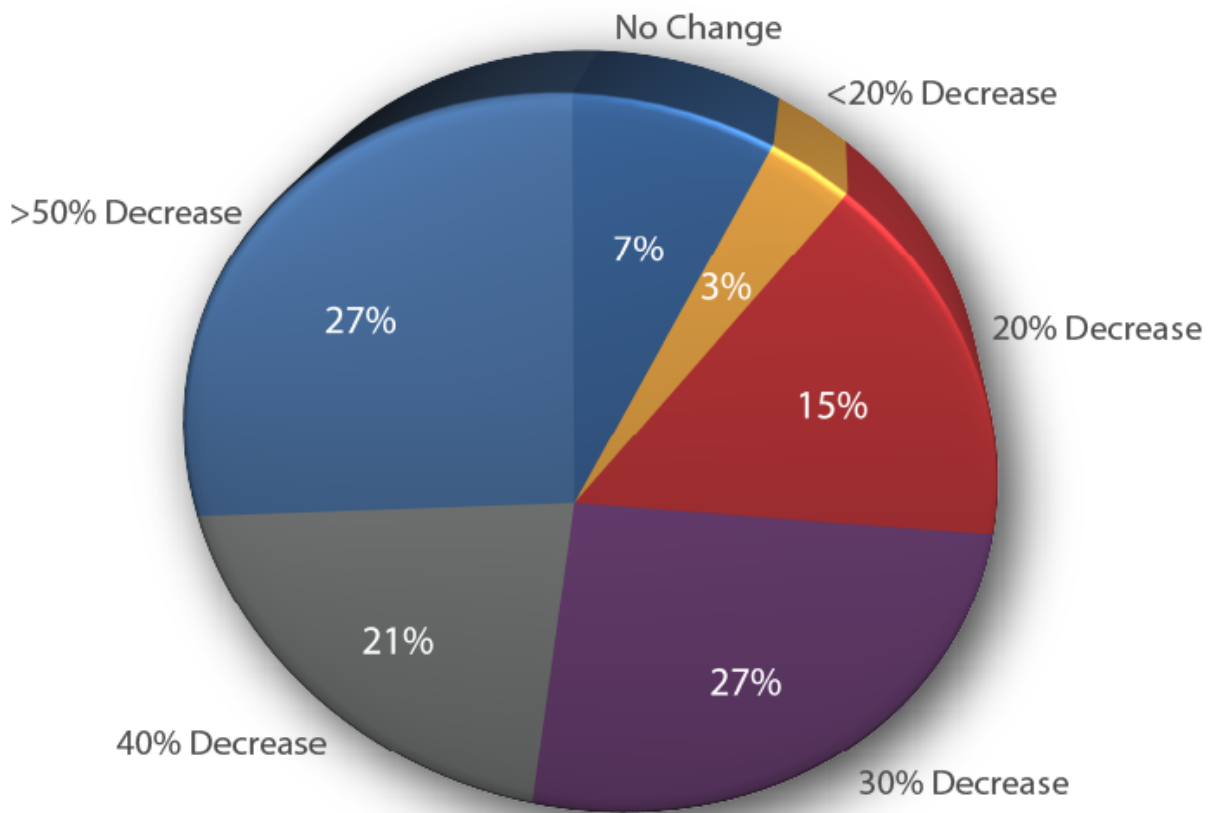


Adversely Affected the Entity's Finances



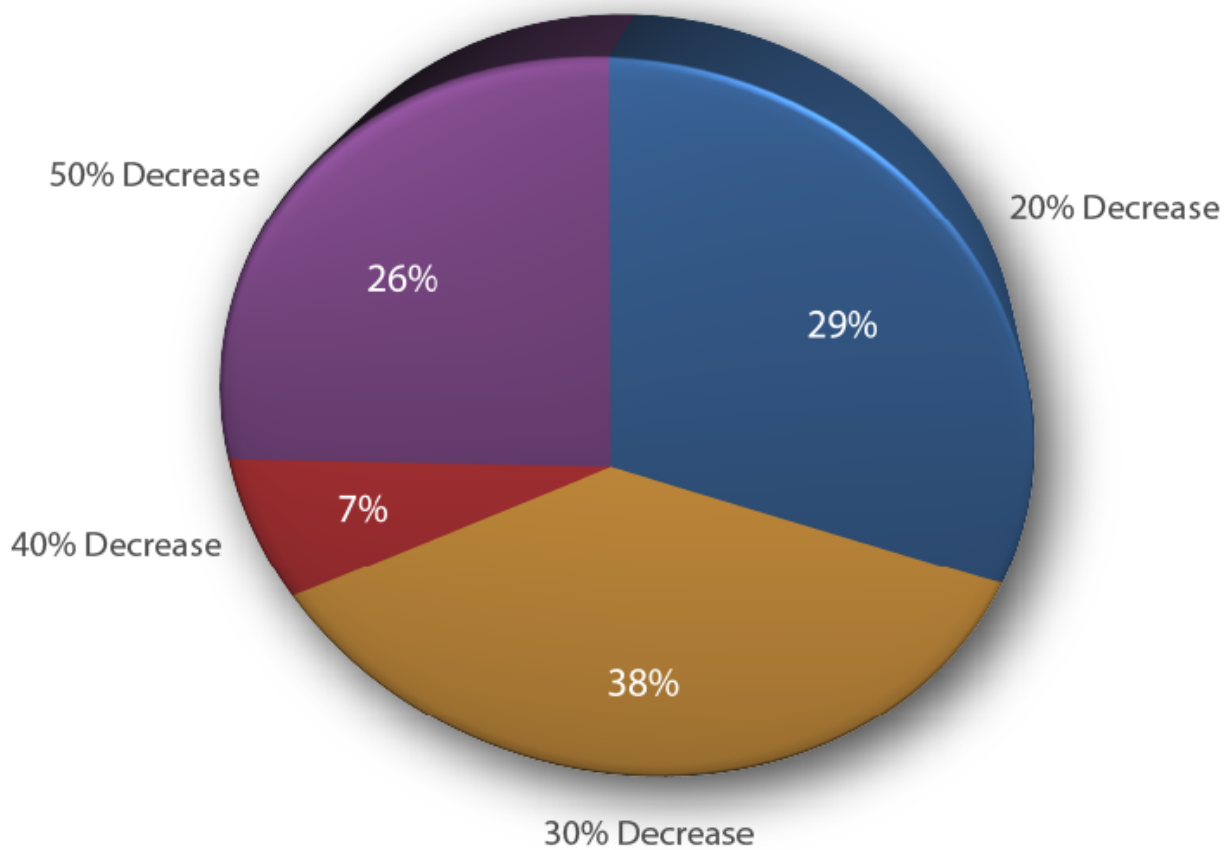


Decrease in Revenue as a Result of the Pandemic





Drop in Emergency Transports for the Time Period of March 1 – April 20, 2019, Versus March 1 – April 20, 2020





Drop in Non-Emergency Transports for the Time Period of March 1 – April 20, 2019, Versus March 1 – April 20, 2020

