

Henry County Soldiers' & Sailors' Memorial Hospital

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Henry County Supervisors approve EMS as Essential Service Special election set for September 10

MOUNT PLEASANT, IA (June 17, 2024) – On Thursday, June 6, the Henry County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution declaring Henry County Emergency Medical Services (HCEMS) as an essential county service. The next step is for county residents to vote at a special election on September 10 to approve a tax levy for EMS programming.

HCEMS is currently owned and operated by Henry County Soldiers' & Sailors' Memorial Hospital. Due to the current property tax cap for HCEMS under hospital ownership, the hospital cannot continue to offer HCEMS and cover the revenue shortfalls.

The state trend shows that the former model of EMS is no longer viable. As of November 2023, 12 Iowa counties have received voter approval to levy for EMS programming. Nearly a dozen additional counties in Iowa are seeking public support in upcoming elections and/or are working on proposals to do so.

“In addition to Henry County Emergency Medical Services providing an invaluable service to our county residents, there is also an economic factor to consider. A significant consideration for newcomers moving into Henry County is knowing that we have high quality, accessible healthcare services. EMS is at the heart of this. EMS provides an essential service that also positively impacts our economy and assists in Henry County’s growth for years to come,” explained Marc Lindeen, Henry County Board of Supervisor.

HCEMS provides vital emergency medical services for Henry County residents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These services include: emergency medical care, critical care transfers, medical transports, education and support to county first responders, public health education, and special event coverage.

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“The ultimate goal for Henry County Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Memorial Hospital is to keep EMS in Henry County to continue to meet the emergency medical needs of area residents. EMS is without a doubt an essential service, and to keep the service in Henry County for years to come, we need public support. The proposed EMS tax levy will require 60% voter approval on September 10th,” explained Joel Prottzman, Henry County Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Memorial Hospital Board of Trustee Chair.

A YES vote on September 10 means that EMS will stay in Henry County, continuing to serve the emergency healthcare needs of area residents. If the vote passes, the current \$0.27 hospital ambulance levy will go away. A new county ambulance tax levy of \$0.75 will instead be implemented, which is a \$0.48 increase over the current hospital ambulance levy rate. A NO vote on September 10 means that future sustainability of EMS in Henry County is at risk.

“This Essential Services Tax will allow EMS to transition to County ownership, allow for additional funding, and ensure that these emergency medical services will remain in Henry County,” stated Prottzman.

Additional information about EMS as an essential service will be given in the following weeks.