

October 26, 2016

Christopher S. Friend
Assembly District 124
476 Maple Street
PO Box 441
Big Flats, NY 14814

Dear Mr Friend:

I need your help! My husband has COPD, emphysema, and heart issues and can not stand up without help. After seeing his Pulmonist on September 26, 2016 he was admitted to Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, PA. During his stay he had extensive tests including X-rays, CT scans, blood work, etc. He was discharged on October 2, 2016. He was fairly stable at home until Friday, October 7. When he got up that morning he was very weak and could not walk without help. By the afternoon he started vomiting and continued to be very weak. He has already lost an enormous amount of weight. By 9:00 pm that evening I called 911 but had to call them again 15 minutes later because they had not arrived. The dispatcher said they were on their way along with a truck. They did not call the EMT's in the Big Flats Fire Department which would have only taken about 3 minutes to arrive at our home.

The ambulance finally arrived (without a truck by the way) and he was ambulated to Corning Hospital where the ER doctor stabilized him and sent him home (because Corning Hospital is not in our insurance network) where he was fairly stable until Saturday, October 15 when it started all over again. He couldn't breathe, was very weak and pale and he had an erratic heartbeat. Again I called 911 and this time I asked the dispatcher specifically to call the Big Flats EMT's in order for them to stabilize him until the ambulance arrived. Apparently because he was alert (even though he was in distress) the dispatcher didn't feel that calling the EMT's was appropriate. The ambulance arrived approximately 30 minutes later. Once again my husband was ambulated to Corning Hospital and was later transported to Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, PA because this hospital is in our insurance network.

I personally spoke with one of the EMT's at the Big Flats Fire Department and they said they can not go out without 911 dispatching them. The EMT I spoke with said if they had been called they could have stabilized him until the ambulance arrived.

My primary complaint is the 911 situation and you should be aware that 911 is very uncooperative. They need to dispatch EMT's in any situation where a person is in distress because it takes so long to get an ambulance. Calling 911 is useless! I thought 911 was supposed to be for emergencies. If my husband's condition wasn't an emergency then I don't know what would warrant one.

I beg you to look into this problem. People's lives are at stake and I know the Big Flats EMT's (or any EMT's in Chemung County) would respond much faster than an ambulance.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Wakefield
15 Miller Street
Big Flats, NY 14814

cc: Thomas J. Santulli, County Executive
Senator Thomas F. O'Mara