

Plains to Peaks RETAC 8th EMS Financial Symposium & EMSAC Chiefs, Managers, Directors Event

Wednesday-Thursday-Friday; September 24-26, 2025

Doubletree Hilton Hotel

1775 E Cheyenne Mountain Blvd

Colorado Springs, CO 80906



Wednesday, September 24th

- 1200-1700
- EMSAC Chiefs, Managers, & Directors Group facilitated discussion on hot topics in EMS today.

Thursday, September 25th

- Matt Zavadsky: Establishing an Appropriate & Compliant Fee Schedule
How Much \$\$ Are You Leaving on the Table?
- Asbel Montes: AI and Healthcare Finance
The Impact of the Big Beautiful Bill on EMS
Leading from a Position of Support
- Kelly Johnston: Patching the Pay Gap by Increasing Reimbursements

Friday, September 26th

- Austin Wingate: Budget Line Items for Your Crews
- Mike Donner: The "Business" of Our Business
- Gabriel Moreno: An Experience with USDA Funding
- Scott Sholes: What Were We Thinking? Long Distance IFTs
- Sean Caffrey: Employee Housing as a Benefit for Staffing
- Tim Dienst: Applying the Financial Education to Your Agency

The EMS Financial Symposium will be provided in a hybrid format. Onsite attendance is available and encouraged. However, the virtual option is available to allow attendance from across the state. All speakers will be in person this year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kim Schallenberger at

kschally@plainstopeaks.org or 719 342 5562

Conference Provided in Collaboration with the
Mile-High RETAC with the National EMS Safety Summit

Registration will be \$150.00 per day for both Onsite and Virtual Attendance on Thursday & Friday. Attendance on Wednesday is FREE but You Must Still Register. Registration and Payment information is included within this brochure.

EMSAC Chiefs, Managers, and Directors

Networking and Discussion Event

Agenda (Times Approximate and Subject to Change)

Wednesday, September 24th

This is the first EMSAC CMD group meeting to provide a networking and discussion event. The program will be facilitated by Sarah Caffrey to keep on topic and follow a fluid agenda. We believe this will be an opportunity for EMS leaders to discuss a variety of topics pertinent to the delivery of EMS in Colorado. Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- **Data Sharing between department leaders to include finance and other topics**
- **Career Development pathways and Sustainability**
- **Resilience for EMS Leaders; Development of Peer Support Teams**
- **DEA/OSHA Compliance**
- **Potential for Emergency Medical Task Force development**
- **What resources does the Colorado EMS community expect from the EMSAC Chiefs, Manager, and Directors Group?**
- **Others topics to be determined**

Tentative Agenda:

1200-1215 Introductions and Overview of Event

Lunch Provided on Site

1215-1500 Facilitated Discussion

1500-1515 Break

1515-1700 Facilitated Discussion

Dinner will be on your own with various restaurants in the area plus an onsite restaurant

Plains to Peaks RETAC 8th Annual EMS Financial Symposium

Agenda (Times Approximate and subject to Change)

Thursday, September 25th

0800-0830 Registration & Introductions

0830-0945 Asbel Montes: The Impact of the “One Big Beautiful Bill” on the EMS Community

This session will explore the healthcare policy shifts and regulatory changes introduced in the major legislation passed in July 2025. Attendees will gain a practical understanding of how this bill affects EMS agencies and what steps are needed to adapt to future healthcare reform. The discussion will focus on how organizations can prepare, advocate, and lead through the change.

0945-1000 BREAK

1000-1115 Kelly Johnston: Patching the Pay Gap-Increasing Reimbursement & Alternative Funding Models

This session will dig into the following hot button topics: Navigating CMS Underpayments, Cost Based vs Fee Schedule Reimbursement, Leveraging Supplemental Payment Programs, Exploring Alternative Funding Options, Operational Efficiency & Revenue Impact.

1120-1230 Matt Zavadsky: Establishing an Appropriate (and Compliant) Fee Schedule

Your fee schedule says a lot about your agency—what you value, how you operate, and whether you’re at risk for compliance scrutiny. In this session, we’ll explore the critical components of developing and maintaining a defensible and strategically sound fee schedule for EMS and ambulance services. Learn how to determine your true costs, benchmark against peers, and comply with key regulatory requirements, including Medicare, Medicaid, and OIG guidance. Whether you’re updating rates or starting from scratch, you’ll leave this session equipped with the tools and insights needed to ensure your fee schedule aligns with your agency’s mission, market position, and compliance obligations.

1230-1330 LUNCH

1330-1445 Asbel Montes: AI and Healthcare Finance: How to Succeed in an Ever-Evolving Technology Space

This session will explore how EMS organizations can apply artificial intelligence and machine learning to improve financial operations and reduce manual inefficiencies. With the right approach, AI can be a powerful tool for achieving cost savings and strategic growth. When used without a clear plan, however, it can create unnecessary risk. Attendees will learn how to use AI intentionally, responsibly, and with purpose.

1445-1500 BREAK

1500-1545 Asbel Montes: Leading from a Position of Support

Some leaders carry too much because they care too much. In this session, we explore the difference between leaders who support and those who enable. Supportive leaders understand the power of boundaries. They know how to walk alongside without taking over. Enabling leaders often carry a quiet pressure to fix. They jump in quickly, hoping to help, but unintentionally block growth and undermine trust. This session challenges leaders to stop doing for others what those individuals can do for themselves. It’s not about withholding support. It’s about leading with wisdom, asking the right questions and creating space for others to rise. Leaders will reflect on when to engage, when to step back, and how to build a team that owns outcomes rather than depends on rescue.

1550-1650 Matt Zavadsky: How Much Are You Leaving on the Table? Billing for Non-traditional Services

As EMS evolves beyond simply a method of conveyance, many agencies are expanding into non-traditional services like treat-and-refer programs, transport to alternate destinations, and Mobile Integrated Healthcare/Community Paramedicine. But are you getting paid for these services—or leaving valuable revenue untapped? This session explores the emerging reimbursement opportunities for non-transport and alternative EMS services. Learn how to document, code, and bill appropriately; understand payer expectations; and identify sustainable funding strategies. Discover how to turn innovation into income while staying compliant and demonstrating value to patients, partners, and payers.

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Agenda (Times Approximate and subject to Change)

Friday, September 26th

0800-0830 Registration & Introductions

0830-0925 Sean Caffrey: How the Cost of Housing Impacts Recruitment and Retention of Your Workforce

Housing costs are directly impacting on the EMS workforce, making it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain personnel, especially in high-cost and rural-resort areas. We'll explore how housing affordability intersects with staffing shortages, discuss examples of EMS agencies and local governments implementing housing stipends, shared housing, and subsidized units, and consider long-term financial strategies to support housing stability. The discussion will also address how proactive investment in workforce housing can serve as a strategic lever to strengthen recruitment pipelines, reduce turnover, and promote operational continuity.

0930-1100 Michael Donner: The Business of Our Business

This session will highlight several key financial concepts related to the ambulance industry. In the session, Mike will delve into the truths and myths of ambulance service billing and reimbursement as well as cash collection pace modeling and how to project future cash flows and expenses. Attendees will learn how to accurately estimate cash flows for their organization, including the effects growth has on cash. They will explore how to build a living, breathing, ongoing financial forecast. Mike will also offer several "Leadership Nuggets" learned over 43 years in EMS.

1100-1115 BREAK

1115-1205 Gabriel Moreno: EMS Under Construction: A Rural District's Journey with USDA Funding

Trinidad Ambulance District secured a USDA Community Facilities Loan under a previous administration. Gabe will speak about the process of leading the agency through the project after the unexpected leadership transition. Gabe will discuss the construction process, the DOLA grant coordination, and how the agency was able to bring the new EMS station to completion after an uncertain start. The process helped to establish a cornerstone for rural EMS delivery in Las Animas County.

1205-1300 LUNCH

1300-1350 Austin Wingate: Budget Line Items for Line Staff

This presentation will look at the department budget and how to share with agency staff. In the absence of information, people will make up their own and that's how rumors take root. There's a fine line between sharing too little information, breeding suspicion, and sharing too much information, breeding confusion or frustration. Austin will share his insight gained through years of hard knocks and observation.

1400-1450 Scott Sholes: What Were We Thinking? Long Distance IFT?

This presentation will discuss lessons learned from a busy long-range ALS Level IFT program. It will look at the community need, reimbursement contract, safety policies, and the program intent versus the reality seven years later.

1450-1505 BREAK

1505-1600 Tim Dienst: Applying the Financial Education to Your Agency

This presentation will apply things learned to an actual agency so that attendees can understand how it would work within their own agency's financial system. Tim will use actual examples from the Ute Pass Regional HSD to demonstrate how to implement improvements within their existing processes.

Plains to Peaks RETAC 8th Annual EMS Financial Symposium

General Information for Attendees

The Plains to Peaks RETAC EMS Financial Symposium will be held in a virtual/hybrid format. Please see details below:

- All speakers will be in person at the conference
- Attendees on both days will be both onsite and virtual
- The virtual format will allow for real time questions/answers
- Lunch and Breaks will be provided for those attending onsite

Registration:

- Please complete the registration form and email back to Kim Schallenberger at kschally@plainstopeaks.org
- Registration Cost is \$150/day for both Thursday & Friday onsite and virtual options
- Registration Cost for Wednesday is FREE but still required for planning purposes.
- Unfortunately, there is no option to pay by credit/debit card
- Agency/Personal Check Payment
 - The Plains to Peaks RETAC will send an invoice after the conference and applicable lodging for payment by check

Lodging at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Colorado Springs:

Room Rate is \$123.00/night; Parking is Free

Booking Link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=COSP-DT&groupCode=CDTP2P&arrivaldate=2025-09-24&departuredate=2025-09-26&cid=OM>

Hotel: DoubleTree by Hilton Colorado Springs

Group Name: Plains to Peaks

Arrival Date: 2025-09-24

Departure Date: 2025-09-26

Continuing Education Credits are available for those interested

- CE are provided by UC Health Memorial EMS Education, South #059
- CE will be emailed upon request once registration payment is received.

Plains to Peaks 8th EMS Financial Symposium

Registration Form

Registration is available online at www.plainstopeaks.org or by completing and emailing this registration form.

Please complete one registration form for each attendee. Submit the completed form to kschally@plainstopeaks.org via email. Your agency will be billed by invoice after the conference completion so payment by check is possible.

Name _____

Agency Name _____

Agency Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Cell Phone # _____

Wednesday, September 24th, Free Attendance but please register so we can plan for food & seating

Attend In Person _____ Attend Virtually _____ Not Attending This Day _____

Thursday, September 25th, \$150.00

Attend In Person _____ Attend Virtually _____ Not Attending This Day _____

Friday, September 26th, \$150.00

Attend In Person _____ Attend Virtually _____ Not Attending This Day _____

Total Fees _____

Conference Speakers



Asbel Montes began his career in the ambulance industry in 1999, working his way up to leading revenue cycle teams for air and ground ambulance agencies, culminating in his current position as Managing Partner of Solutions Group. He previously served on the Board of Directors for the American Ambulance Association (AAA) and numerous committees. He has also testified as an expert witness before federal and state health committees regarding ambulance reimbursement and veteran health initiatives related to emergency medicine. In 2016, Asbel was appointed to the Ambulance Transport Alternatives Task Force for the State of Louisiana by Governor John Bel Edwards. In 2020, Asbel was named to the Air Ambulance and Patient Billing Advisory Committee by the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation. In 2022, he was named chair of the Ground Ambulance and Patient Billing Advisory Committee tasked by Congress to provide recommendations to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury on ways to protect consumers from balance billing when using ground ambulance services. Asbel is a respected thought leader on reimbursement initiatives within the industry and is a requested speaker at numerous healthcare conferences.



Matt Zavadsky is an EMS/Mobile Healthcare Consultant with PWW | Advisory Group, focusing on assisting local communities, EMS agencies, fire departments, ambulance services, hospitals and other healthcare organizations in evaluating and improving their EMS and mobile healthcare delivery systems. Prior to joining PWW | AG, he served as the Chief Transformation Officer for MedStar Mobile Healthcare, the Public Utility Model EMS system serving Fort Worth and 13 other cities in North Texas where he helped guide the development and implementation of innovative programs with healthcare and community partners to transform the role of MedStar in the healthcare system and community. Matt has a master's degree in healthcare administration, with a Graduate Certificate in Healthcare Data Management. He is a past President of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), is currently their South-Central Region Director and chairs their EMS Economics Committee. He also chairs the Education Committee for the Academy of International Mobile Healthcare Integration (AIMHI), an association comprised of high-performance and Public Utility Model EMS systems across the United States.



Kelly Johnston, owner and founder of JFS, LLC a Healthcare Consulting CPA firm, has a large amount of experience in both the public accounting and private industry accounting fields. Her background includes a bachelor's in finance, Master of Science in Accounting, and Master in Healthcare Delivery Science, with experience in the healthcare industry with critical access hospitals and physician offices, audit, and tax preparation. Her passion for working in rural healthcare through providing financial guidance, performing entity turn around strategies, and supporting with financial planning has helped communities keep their hospitals and EMS programs intact. Her education and experience can add value to new start-up organizations, developing businesses, and healthcare entities by creating a strong financial reporting set up, assisting in new financial reports, key performance monitoring, and facilitating board education. Personally, Kelly loves to spend time with her husband outdoors and riding her horses.



Michael Donner began his career in EMS in 1982, as an EMT and then worked as a paramedic, firefighter, and flight-medic. In 1990, Mike was hired by LifeFleet Ambulance where he served as corporate risk manager until 1994, when LifeFleet was sold. In late 1995, he re-entered the ambulance industry as regional risk manager for MedTrans. In early 1997 Michael co-founded Pridemark Paramedic Services. Originally Pridemark's chief financial officer, he became the president and chief executive officer in 2005 and stayed in that position until Rural/Metro purchased the company in 2010. After a brief retirement, Mr. Donner rejoined Rural/Metro in late 2013 to run all Colorado operations. He left in late 2014 to form Apex, where he serves as the CEO. Michael's article "So, you want to start an ambulance company" was published by EMS Magazine in 1999. He has lectured to the ambulance industry on numerous topics including, "Uncomfortable Truths About EMS Leadership", "Risk Management From The Top Down", "Managing a Cash Flow Crisis", "How to Sell Your Debt", and various other leadership topics. Personally, Michael is married to Stephanie. He is an avid, low-handicap golfer, a trained chef and wine sommelier and the human friend of Spike the Wonder Dog.



Tim has been 'chasing' ambulance and fire trucks for 40+ years beginning in 1976. He has worked in nearly every position for various ambulance service and is now the Chief Executive Officer for the Ute Pass Regional Health Service District. He attended the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs earning both of his Bachelor of Arts and his Master of Public Administration. As an EMS advocate, Tim is very active in local, state, and national forums to enhance EMS operations and improve financial sustainability. Locally he serves as Treasurer for the Teller County EMS Council, Chair of the Plains to Peaks RETAC, and Chair of the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Council. Tim was also appointed as the EMS representative on the state Medicaid Rate Review Advisory Committee.



Gabriel Moreno, ASM, NRP is the Executive Director and EMS Chief of Trinidad Ambulance District in southern Colorado where he oversees emergency response across more than 4700 square miles of rural and frontier terrain. Beginning his public safety career in 2001 as a firefighter/EMT in Raton, New Mexico, Gabriel went to work for American Medical Response in Pueblo and became a paramedic in 2011. Since joining Trinidad Ambulance District in 2012, Gabriel has taken on increasing leadership responsibilities and now focuses on rural EMS sustainability, infrastructure development, and interagency partnerships.



Austin Wingate is the Chief of Grand County EMS and has worked in both urban and rural EMS settings for more than 18 years. Austin's passions lie in enhancing operational safety, clinical efficiency, and provider well-being. He strives to apply practical, real-world perspectives to challenges facing EMS with a goal to build a healthier, more resilient, and highly reliable EMS workforce.



Sean Caffrey, MBA, FACPE, NRP is the Chief Executive Officer of the Crested Butte Fire Protection District which offers multiple programs to support member housing options. He has over 35 years of EMS leadership experience and has spent more than 2 decades working in mountain resort areas of Colorado. As a leader and member of multiple statewide and national associations, he has explored the topic of workforce housing extensively and was the lead author on this topic in the most recent report from the EMS Sustainability Task Force.



Scott Sholes began his EMS career in 1979 and is the EMS Chief with the Durango Fire Protection District. He currently chairs the SWRETAC, as well as the La Plata County EMS Council. He is the Immediate Past President of the Emergency Medical Services Association of Colorado.