Growing concern among supervisors over ambulance shortage

By: Melissa deCordova, Sun Staff Writer

Published on: Tuesday, May 8, 2007

NORWICH – Rumors about further cutbacks in ambulance service in Chenango County have at least one governmental department director concerned.

Community Mental Hygiene Services Director MaryAnn Spryn told members of her standing committee last week that she had heard the rumor and, if true, that such a move would be "a major problem." Spyrn's department uses ambulances at least once a week - and sometimes as much as three or four times a week - to deliver mentally ill patients in need of emergency medical care to Fox Hospital in Oneonta.

Binghamton-based Superior Ambulance Services, in business locally since 1996, cut back in mid-January this year from operating three ambulances to one. The company blamed increased operational costs for fuel and payroll for the cutback.

Since then, city of Norwich Fire Department services and other voluntary emergency crews from Greene, Oxford, Sherburne and South Otselic have been forced to pick up the slack. The towns of Bainbridge, McDonough, New Berlin, Pharsalia, and Smyrna do not offer their own EMS services.