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March 22, 2012

Joint Committee on Judiciary
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Raised Bill # 5545

Dear Committee Members:

I run a large medical billing firm that exclusively serves clients in the ambulance industry. We handle the claims processing for more than 30% of the ambulance services that charge in this state.

I urge you to support and pass Bill # 5545.

In emergency situations, ambulances are often called by law enforcement, fire officials, by-standers and friends for a person having a medical problem. The 9-1-1 system requires the ambulance service designated for the community where the person is located; to respond, treat and transport the patient regardless of knowing how, or if, they will get paid.

In fact, the ambulance industry as a whole has the worst payment demographics of any healthcare specialty due to the rendering of 'instant credit' at the scene of an emergency event. It is also fairly common for patients to call up days or weeks later and refuse to pay their bill using the excuse "I didn't call for the ambulance".

Many of the communities in this state are served by small, non-profit ambulance organizations and others are served by agencies operated by financially strapped municipalities.

Passage of this bill will help all ambulance providers in this state by giving us a tool to use in billing and collection activity, up to and including in Small Claims Court, by establishing the contractual relationship and obligation of the patient to pay for the services they received.

As you know, the State Department of Public Health sets the rates for each ambulance service annually. Merely setting the rates does not mean that the ambulance services can collect on each trip. Our economic climate is such that every provider of service should be able to collect the maximum amount of fees for services rendered. This legislation will help every ambulance service in the state collect more of what they're owed.

I've been fortunate to have worked in the ambulance industry in this state for the last 33 years. After running multiple EMS agencies over those years and dealing with this problem, that has plagued the industry, throughout my entire career...this legislation will finally give the industry the legal standing it needs to enforce it's rights in collecting for services rendered in good faith an in accordance with the State EMS Regulations.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Bob Holdsworth

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