March 18, 2014

To: Planning and Development Committee

From: Peter Struble Fire Chief (retired Wallingford Fire Department)

Re: Support Adaption of all EMS PSA Task Force Final Report Recommendations

If implemented, the 5 recommendations offered in the EMS PSA Task Force Final Report would literally be the most significant progress that Connecticut's EMS System has seen in the last 25 years. The PSA System is almost 40 years old. It needs to be updated to incorporate the elements of best practice, transparency and home rule; all of which are good public policy.

Recommendations #1 through 4 in the EMS PSA Task Force Final Report are basic common sense. They should have been implemented many years ago. These recommendations have the unanimous support of the entire Task Force and the EMS agencies that they represent. The implementation of these recommendations during this legislative session is a home run for the State Legislature.

EMS PSA Task Force Final Report Recommendations #5
Recommendation #5 is the Alternative Provision of PSA Responsibilities. This recommendation simply states that municipalities shall have the right to submit a Local EMS Plan for consideration to DPH for the alternative provision of primary service area responder responsibilities. Recommendation #5 does not offer any guarantees of a change of EMS provider, it simply offers a municipality, which believes that their community can better served by a different EMS provider, the opportunity to have their specific case heard by DPH.

Recommendation #5 takes into account all of the arguments against PSA reform that have been made by the commercial ambulance services. Recommendation #5 requires DPH to schedule a formal hearing, notice all of the parties having interest in the matter, and to hear testimony on the very concerns that the commercial ambulance services have brought forward. These issues include the impact on patient care, the Local EMS Plan, EMS System sustainability, impact on the local, regional and statewide EMS System, and recommendations from Medical Control / Sponsor Hospital.

Recommendation #5 gives DPH the authority to hear all of the facts of a particular situation, to evaluate them on their merits, and to determine who is positioned to offer the best patient care in a community going forward. In effect, this is perhaps the most important element of the recommendations. It brings the system into alignment with other modern delivery systems which provide an opportunity for full due diligence, evaluation and quality assessment. Modern healthcare medical systems encourage evaluation and provide the opportunity for change when the provider or system is not aligned.

Recommendation #5 is Critical for Municipalities
Please do not be surprised that Recommendation #5 did not win the endorsement of the commercial ambulance services. The existing statutes and regulations do not include

specific performance measures for EMS providers. There are no established required response times. A provider simply has to show up in order to meet their obligation as a Primary Service Area Responder. The important takeaway is that municipalities are directly responsible to their citizens to provide the highest quality care through the best delivery system. The existing system is an obstacle to this goal in that it has established artificial protection for providers who don't necessarily have a vested interest. Municipalities serve the needs of their resident before, during and after emergencies. The buck always starts and stops at the local level.