



4 Wakeley Street
Seymour, CT 06483
(203) 888-8843
Fax (203) 881-5018

Date: March 13, 2014
To: Public Health Committee
From: L. Scott Andrews
Re: Opposition of Raised Senate Bill No. 416

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Scott Andrews. I am the Executive Director of Seymour Ambulance Association. We are an MIC Advanced EMT level service providing primary emergency medical care to the residents of the Town of Seymour.

I am writing this testimony to voice my opposition to Raised Senate Bill No. 416 that provides for the elimination of Advanced Emergency Medical Technician as a scope of practice within the State of Connecticut.

Seymour Ambulance Association has been practicing at this level for almost thirty (30) years. We have always maintained a strong base of Advanced EMT's and currently have twelve AEMT's on staff and five paramedics who serve as AEMT's. We respond to approximately 2,200 calls per year and have an Advanced EMT on or available to respond to almost all of those calls. Those times that we may not have an AEMT available to respond are on second and third requests for service.

Our system is designed as a BLS or an intermediate (Advanced) ambulance response followed by paramedic intercept provider. Because our system is set up for this type of response, we are not able to bill for advanced life support (ALS-1) services unless there is no paramedic available for the call. Therefore, money is not a factor in my arguments. My argument is on behalf of our patients who get to benefit because we can begin providing advanced life support prior to the paramedic arriving on scene. This provides time-saving measures for potentially lifesaving care. Eliminating this level of service will in effect reduce a level of care currently being provided and reduce the services that we can provide to our patients.

Instead of eliminating this level of care, I am requesting that you vote no on SB No. 416 and recommend that the Department of Public Health require Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians to upgrade their training to the most current (2009) national standard curriculum.

The Seymour Ambulance Association is dedicated to helping to improve the quality of life for the residents and guests of the Town of Seymour.

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www.seymourems.org

The greatest differences between the 1985 curriculum (the State of Connecticut's current curriculum) and the 2009 curriculum are not only the interventions that AEMT's are able to perform but also the knowledge base and patient assessment skills. The greatest thing that you can do would be to give our technicians the opportunity to improve and expand our patient assessment skills and interventions, not eliminate them.

Also, expanding this scope of practice could also help improve patient care in areas of the State where there is a shortage of paramedic coverage. Since the 2009 national standard curriculum expands the advanced life support role of the AEMT, those patients can now receive the advanced care they need in a timely manner thus potentially saving lives. Even one additional life saved is worth your time in voting no for this bill. If you research other states around Connecticut, you will find that many use Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians to augment those systems where paramedics are not immediately available or keeping those paramedics available for the most serious calls or for the "community paramedicine" that is rising and expanding across our country.

There are also thoughts that instead of training EMT's to the AEMT level that they should be trained as paramedics instead. Many EMT's are not interested in becoming paramedics due to time constraints and cost of programs. The AEMT gives those individuals an opportunity to build upon their knowledge and skills without making a yearlong or more commitment and spending thousands of dollars.

Our State does not seem to fully embrace the Emergency Medical Services system as a profession. This is quite evident when legislation such as this is proposed which eliminates a higher level of care for our EMT's to aspire to. I would challenge that if the Department of Public Health attempted to eliminate the Advanced Practice Registered Nursing scope of care that there would be great upheaval and it would not pass. I am asking for the same consideration for the EMS profession. Please vote no on Raised Senate Bill No. 416.

Thank you for your time and strong consideration to this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,



L. Scott Andrews, EMT-P
Executive Director