



Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association

P.O. Box 209

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Testimony of Bruce Baxter, Interim President

RE: Raised Bill No. 6636- AN ACT CONCERNING COVID-19 AND ENHANCED
FEDERAL MEDICAID FUNDING

Concerning

MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR 9-1-1 AMBULANCE SERVICES
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 24, 2021

Senator Monroe, Representative Abercrombie, and Members of the Human services Committee, my name is Bruce Baxter. I am the interim President of the Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association and the Chief Executive Office of New Britain Emergency Medical Services, Inc. in New Britain, CT. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Bill 6636- An Act Concerning Covid-19 and Enhanced Federal Medicaid Funding.

The Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association is supportive of the intent of Raised Bill 6636 to increase reimbursement rates to all Medicaid Providers during the course of the current pandemic with modifications as outlined below.

1. The provision of 9-1-1 ambulance services to our local communities is an essential public health- public safety net to assure all residents and visitors have access to essential emergency services when needed twenty-four hours a day seven days per week. Regardless of call volume, ambulances must be staffed in each community to manage their anticipated call volume.
2. Medicaid reimbursement rates for the ambulance industry has not increased since October 2015. During that time period the industry has witness significant increases in labor expense, the expense associated with purchasing ambulances, updating biomedical equipment, the cost of disposable medical supplies and medications. Since March of 2020, our industry has been challenges by the extraordinary increase in cost associated with protecting our staff with the required personal protective equipment while our transport volumes which impacts our revenue have dropped significantly. Most 9-1-1 only ambulance services have seen transport volumes decrease by 26.5 percent without a corresponding drop in 9-1-1 response volumes.

3. In reviewing various healthcare inflation calculators, most agree that health care inflation has risen 11% between October 2015, when Connecticut's Ambulance Industry received its last rate increases to current date.

Based on these factors, the Connecticut EMS Chiefs Association would urge the Human Services Committee to advocate that the State increase Medicaid reimbursement for the provision of essential ambulance services for Medicaid Beneficiaries by 11% and make that increase permanent.

While we recognize that each sector of health care funded by Medicaid has equally compelling needs, the State's network of 9-1-1 ambulance services function as an integral component of Connecticut's emergency medical services system. The emergency medical services system is the intersection between emergency medicine, public safety and is the out of hospital component of the acute care healthcare system. The mission of EMS is targeted at identifying, responding, assessing, treating and entering the suddenly ill and injured patients in the community into the healthcare system. The 9-1-1 Ambulance component of the State's EMS system is not fully tax based funded. In most communities, tax-based support is less than 10% of the entire services revenue budgets. In urban communities, the largest 9-1-1 population receiving 9-1-1 ambulance services are Medicaid beneficiaries. Hence the need for the 11% request increase permanently assures the fiscal viability of our State EMS system.

As always, we are appreciative for the opportunity to present testimony in this matter. We are always available to work with the committee to answer specific questions you may have.