



## AETNA AMBULANCE SERVICE INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 1150  
MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT 06045-1150  
PHONE: (860) 247-6792  
FAX: (860) 240-7574

WWW.ASM-AETNA.COM  
LOCATED AT:  
140 VAN BLOCK AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106

---

### Testimony of Robert Mara, EMT Supervisor, Aetna Ambulance Service (Hartford)

#### *In opposition to*

#### SB No. 409 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE NONEMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION OF ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CONFINED TO A STRETCHER.

Transportation Committee Public Hearing, February 16, 2021

Senator Cassano, Representative Lemar, Senator Somers, Representative Carney and members of the Transportation Committee, my name is Robert Mara, and I am an EMT Supervisor with Aetna Ambulance Service serving the community of Hartford and surrounding areas for the last 75 years.

I am here today to testify in **strong opposition to Proposed Bill No. 409, An Act Concerning the Nonemergency Transportation of Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities Confined to a Stretcher.**

I would like to first thank everyone in this committee for not only allowing me to speak again on this topic, but acknowledging through past decisions the importance of the necessity our service provide in ambulance transportation.

I don't need to tell the group that this year has been a challenge, and for our organization, we have seen our all our employees tirelessly come into work day in and day out. Without complaining about the 5 extra pounds of plastic they are required to wear on every call, or the uncertainty of whether they will bring home sickness to their families. We have seen the deterioration of wheelchair dialysis transports, patients that are too sick to miss appointments, while non-trained wheelchair providers stayed home. But through all this, ambulance providers across the state stepped up to help stabilize this systemic problem.

All EMS personnel in our State are trained and tested on proper patient care methods during entry-level courses that reflect in our ability to maintain safety for the patient and ourselves. This is not limited to proper lifting and moving techniques, but proper donning and doffing of PPE, whether it be this pandemic or any future global issues. At Aetna Ambulance Service, we have an infectious control officer and dedicated training facility where all medical personnel are tested annually by completing both a written and physical exam. While this bill states that there will be similar training, there is no substitute for the preparation of an EMT, which is continual, and uses best practices that are updated by our Office of Emergency Medical Service (OEMS).

It is not uncommon during a routine transport to be redirected to an emergency department. This is mainly due to patient status changes, i.e., seizures, chest pain, difficulty breathing, or mental health issues such as PTSD. Having EMTs providing care ensures that all patients, during their most vulnerable condition, will receive immediate medical attention. They are identified as patients because they are not healthy like you or me. They may be frail or debilitated; therefore, they require continuous medical supervision.



## AETNA AMBULANCE SERVICE INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 1150  
MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT 06045-1150  
PHONE: (860) 247-6792  
FAX: (860) 240-7574

WWW.ASM-AETNA.COM  
LOCATED AT:  
140 VAN BLOCK AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106

---

Stretcher vans jeopardize the balance of emergency services among commercial, municipal, and volunteer organizations by creating an economic strain on the system as organization will need to reduce staffing. As indicated earlier, these services have proven significant throughout this pandemic, and any disruption would cause trickle down effects from hospitals to nursing homes, and to the 911 emergency response system.

We should entrust the well-being of our citizens to the medical professionals who have the appropriate training and continuing education to assist some of the most vulnerable in the state. I want to thank every member of this committee for taking the time and listening to me, and I am available to answer any questions.

Robert R. Mara MSM, EMT  
EMT/Field Training Supervisor  
Aetna Ambulance Service, Inc.  
140 Van Block Ave  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Office [860-247-6792](tel:860-247-6792) ext. 107  
Cell [860-883-8793](tel:860-883-8793)  
Email: [rmara@asm-aetna.com](mailto:rmara@asm-aetna.com)  
[www.asm-aetna.com](http://www.asm-aetna.com)