

## **2016 EMS On The Hill Day Talking Points**

### **S. 453/H.R. 1818, the Veterans Emergency Medical Technician Support Act of 2015:**

This legislation introduced by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) would assist military medics transitioning to civilian emergency medical services (EMS). Without a transition program, veteran military medics returning home face steep obstacles to entering the civilian EMS workforce and are unable to contribute their valuable medical skills to their communities. S. 453/H.R. 1818:

- Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a demonstration program for states with a shortage of emergency medical technicians (EMTs) that streamlines state requirements and procedures to assist veterans who completed military EMT training to meet state EMT certification, licensure, and other requirements;
- Determines the extent to which the requirements for the education, training, and skill level of EMTs in the State are equivalent to requirements for the education, training, and skill level of military EMTs;
- Identifies methods, such as waivers, for military EMTs to forego or meet any such equivalent State requirements; and gives priority to States that demonstrate a shortage of EMTs.

### **H.R. 4365, Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2016:**

This legislation introduced by Congressman Richard Hudson (R-NC) and Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC) would help ensure access to vital emergency medications for patients when they need it most.

- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has indicated it will disallow standing orders when it moves to promulgate a rule regarding the delivery, storage and administration of controlled substances by EMS personnel. Absent Congressional action, patients may lose access to those life-saving medications in emergency situations, and established practice will be disrupted because laws have not kept up with the evolution of medicine;
- This bill ensures EMS personnel may continue to administer controlled substances, such as pain and anti-seizure medications, under the supervision of the EMS physician medical director. The established practice of medicine allows appropriately trained EMTs and paramedics to administer controlled substances to patients using "standing orders," which are pre-existing treatment protocols established by physicians;
- H.R. 4365 codifies the use of standing orders in statute to ensure this vital care continues to be available to patients in need of emergency medical care;

### **H.R. 2366, the Field EMS Modernization and Innovation Act:**

This legislation introduced by Congressman Larry Buschon (R-IN) would modernize EMS from an antiquated system to one that is innovative, patient-centered and highly integrated in response to the 2006 Institute Of Medicine report that identified issues plaguing the provision of care to patients with emergency medical conditions in the field. The bill:

- Clarifies the Department of Health and Human Services as the lead agency for emergency medical care as recommended by IOM (HHS is already the lead for public health emergencies); facilitates a national field EMS strategy and codifies a 2007 Presidential Directive to establish an Office of Emergency Medical Care at HHS;

- Establishes the evaluation of Field EMS alternative delivery models and a voluntary quality incentive program with the goal of improving outcomes and lowering costs;
- Establishes grant opportunities for EMS providers that demonstrate need to improve preparedness response;
- Enhances medical oversight through physician led guidelines and identifies impediments to quality improvement;
- Establishes a grant program to recognize Field EMS as a health profession to ensure the availability, quality and capability of Field EMS practitioners, managers, medical directors and educators; and
- Requires the Secretary to evaluate the extent to which research related to Field EMS is conducted across HHS and requires the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to establish a Field EMS Evidence-Based Center of Excellence.

### **H.R. 2274, to Establish a National EMS Memorial**

This bill introduced by Congressman Stephen Lynch (D-MA) would create the National Emergency Medical Services Foundation, which would undertake the effort to design and create a memorial in Washington D.C. to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's EMS practitioners.

- Each year, 850,000 EMS practitioners respond to more than 30 million calls to serve 22 million patients in need of care at a moment's notice and without reservation;
- According to the Department of Labor and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, EMS practitioners die in the line of duty at a rate more than twice the national average for all occupational fatalities. During their careers, EMS practitioners experience an injury rate of virtually 100 percent;
- The Federal government will not pay for building the memorial. Funds will come from donations or other private sponsorships. Congress must approve the establishment of any new memorials on federal land.

### **Congressional EMS Caucus**

The Congressional EMS Caucus chaired by Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN) helps promote emergency medical services and the life-saving care they deliver to all patients with emergency medical conditions.

- EMS makes a difference for millions of Americans. EMS saves lives and is a unique and critical part of the healthcare delivery system. EMS is a public benefit provided by both governmental and non-governmental providers that citizens assume will always be there to serve them;
- Despite the growing body of evidence documenting the value of emergency medical care in improved patient outcomes and/or cost-effectiveness for heart, stroke, and respiratory emergencies, as well as pediatric and trauma care, EMS remains significantly underfunded and is severely challenged to best serve patients;
- The Congressional EMS Caucus will help promote, educate, and increase awareness among decision-makers on the federal policy issues affecting EMS. Congressional support for EMS at the federal level is needed now more than ever.