

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
U.S. Senate  
SH-520  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Bennet  
U.S. Senate  
SR-261  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cassidy and Bennet:

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for S. 916, the "Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017," and to thank you for your leadership on this important, lifesaving issue. This legislation will ensure the continued ability of emergency medical services (EMS) personnel to administer controlled substances under the guidance of the physician medical director to countless individuals who are sick or injured enough to need them.

The unique nature of EMS is unlike other health care services governed by the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). There is a demonstrated clinical need for administering controlled substance medications in the pre-hospital setting, such as to treat active seizures or administer pain medicine. Updating the CSA to recognize the existing delivery model is essential to protect patients. It will provide the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) a firm statutory foundation from which to oversee the pre-hospital use of controlled substances and prevent drug diversion while ensuring essential medicines are provided to patients in need.

A critical component of S. 916 specifically clarifies that the current practice of physician medical directors overseeing care provided by paramedics and other EMS personnel via "standing orders" is statutorily allowed and protected. The use of standing orders is necessary so that physician medical directors can establish these pre-set protocols that EMS practitioners follow in delivering pre-hospital care. When minutes count, these standing orders are essential to enable EMS personnel to immediately administer controlled substances on a timely basis and save lives. In the absence of standing orders, patients would not have access to the time-sensitive and potentially life-saving interventions they so desperately need.

Thank you again for your leadership on this vital issue and we look forward to working with you to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Ambulance Association  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
Association of Critical Care Transport  
Emergency Nurses Association  
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians  
National Association of EMS Physicians  
National Association of State EMS Officials