



National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
Post Office Box 1400 * Clinton, Mississippi 39060-1400
Phone: 800-34-NAEMT or 601-924-7744 * Fax: 601-924-7325
Website: www.NAEMT.org

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), please accept our thanks and appreciation for the efforts of Congress to support states as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, our profession is deeply disappointed and concerned with the lack of recognition by federal leaders of the care provided by EMTs and paramedics, the role of EMS in the pandemic response, and the absence of direct financial support to EMS through any of the bills that have been passed by Congress to date. We call on our federal leaders in Congress to address this oversight as soon as possible. EMS is at a breaking point and we need government support. The continuation of EMS care to patients depends on it.

Across the country, in large urban areas as well as small rural communities, EMTs and paramedics are serving on the frontlines of our nation's war against the COVID-19 pandemic, oftentimes without the necessary supplies and equipment to ensure the safety of their patients and themselves. Emergency medical services (EMS) are responding to increasing calls from patients with suspected or positively diagnosed coronavirus, in addition to 911 calls for patients with severe injuries and illness, including cardiac arrests and strokes. All EMS systems, whether they are public, private or a combination of both, are struggling. The additional burdens placed upon our EMS systems and personnel are challenging even for the strongest systems.

Lack of medical supplies, particularly Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including face masks, gloves, goggles and gowns; ventilators, and other essential medical supplies and medications, is endangering our EMTs and paramedics, their families and colleagues and their patients. EMS personnel are having to utilize improvised or recycled PPE. A growing number of EMTs and paramedics are being infected with the COVID-19 virus, removing their ability to answer 911 calls. Some are fighting for their lives on

respirators. While some states have implemented priority testing for their EMS personnel, many have yet to enact this testing. The U.S. Public Health Service has given EMS personnel testing its lowest priority.

Congress has passed crucial pandemic relief and stimulus bills in the last couple of weeks, however, this legislation does not provide direct funding relief or protection to our nation's EMTs and paramedics. Funds to support the pandemic response are being provided to state government and/or hospitals, which do not trickle down to EMS. EMS agencies receive little to no funding from programs such as the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund and the Assistance to Firefighter Grants. EMS agencies are not receiving funds or supplies for their EMS personnel. In some communities, EMS is on the brink of collapse.

For EMS to sustain its services and protect its personnel the following actions need to be taken immediately by federal leaders:

- Reimburse all EMS agencies for overtime wages paid to employees and additional costs necessary to provide emergency medical services during the public health pandemic.
- Give priority to testing for EMS Personnel and their families.
- Give priority access to PPE for EMS personnel.
- Reimburse EMTs and paramedics for the cost of daycare for EMS personnel with children.
- Give priority access to EMS agencies for vital prehospital medications.
- Provide direct funding to all EMS agencies for ventilators and other needed medical equipment.
- Provide direct funding to EMS to purchase ambulances.
- Allow use of the A0998 HCPCS code for EMS to respond and transport to the appropriate healthcare facility, not necessarily the hospital, freeing up hospital beds.
- Ensure all EMS personnel are covered in all applicable COVID-19 provisions by specifically including Emergency Medical Services Providers and Personnel

Please help us so that we can continue to care for all emergency patients during this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Matt Zavadsky, MS-HSA, NREMT
President, NAEMT