



National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
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April 2, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians ([NAEMT](http://www.NAEMT.org)), I seek your guidance on how Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies can access the funds provided by Congress through the \$100 billion Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund included in the CARES Act signed into law by President Trump. We have been informed by congressional leaders that this new fund will be administered through states, and that it was Congress' intent that some of these funds would be provided to EMS agencies. However, we are very concerned that EMS agencies and their personnel who are risking their lives on a daily basis to care for COVID-19 patients will not receive any relief from this new fund.

Historically, EMS agencies and personnel have not received direct funding from HHS for medical preparedness and response or indirect funding from HHS through the states. Although the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) has frequently stated the importance of EMS as one of the "pillars" of our nation's medical preparedness and response strategy, these statements have not translated into financial support for EMS. Funds appropriated by Congress for the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation (PAHPAI) Act are provided to states. Unfortunately, PAHPAI funds do not trickle down to EMS.

Based on our experiences with PAHPAI, we are deeply worried that EMS will not receive any of the CARE Act funds. We seek your urgent action to ensure that EMS agencies and their personnel receive relief through this fund, as Congress intended, by:

- Designating \$5 billion from the fund to provide relief and support to EMS agencies and personnel;
- Providing clear guidance to States to allocate designated funds to EMS to cover pandemic response expenses;
- Fast tracking the application process in order for EMS agencies to receive relief through this fund as soon as possible.

EMTs and paramedics across the country are serving on the front lines of our nation's war against the pandemic. EMS agencies of all sizes and varieties – both public and private - are struggling to pay for the costs associated with overtime and backfill staffing, procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies, providing continuing training on infection control, and retrofitting vehicles to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Funds are desperately needed as EMS agencies are quickly becoming overwhelmed by the financial costs associated with COVID-19 response and preparedness. In many communities, EMS is at the breaking point.

Please help us continue to care for COVID-19 and all patients needing emergency medical care by ensuring that our EMS agencies and their EMTs and paramedics receive the relief and support they most desperately need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Zavadsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Matt Zavadsky, MS-HSA, NREMT
President, NAEMT