

## 2017 EMS On The Hill Day Talking Points

### **H.R. 304/S. XX, Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017:**

This legislation introduced by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) would help ensure access to vital emergency medications for patients when they need it most and ensure EMS personnel's work is not compromised.

- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has indicated it will prohibit standing orders when it moves to circulate 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. 304/S. XX 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.
- Please support passage of this bill in the Senate. A similar bill, H.R. 304, introduced by Congressman Richard Hudson (R-NC) and Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC) passed the House in January by a vote of 404 to 0. *Please thank your House lawmakers for supporting this bill.*

### **H.R. XX, Strengthen EMS Act (SEMSA)**

This legislation introduced by Congressman Larry Bucshon (R-IN) would strengthen EMS as a critical component of our nation's emergency response and healthcare systems through the development of the EMS workforce, integration of EMS in all federal emergency, disaster and healthcare plans and programs, and quality improvements in all aspects of EMS patient care. The bill would:

- Clearly define the EMS workforce and ensure that the workforce is accurately and appropriately classified and counted as a first step in planning and building our nation's EMS workforce capacity.
- Ensure that EMS is fully integrated into our nation's emergency preparedness and disaster response strategy, and that national EMS stakeholders are full participants in strategy development and implementation.
- Ensure that the EMS workforce receives the necessary training and equipment to fully participate alongside law enforcement and firefighters as a critical component of our nation's disaster and mass casualty response and homeland security infrastructure, and to respond to our nation's public health and medical emergencies whether deliberate, accidental, or natural.
- Ensure that prehospital trauma care is fully integrated into our nation's regionalized trauma infrastructure and poison centers to ensure rapid recognition, treatment and transport of critical patients to tertiary care centers.
- Ensure that EMS is fully integrated in the national health information technology strategy, and that national EMS stakeholders are full participants in strategy development and implementation.
- Promote EMS quality improvement to ensure that patients receive safe and high quality EMS care.
- Please support this bill by becoming an original co-sponsor (in both the House and Senate).

## **Permanent Ambulance Medicare Relief and Reform**

Ambulance service providers are an essential part of our local and national healthcare and emergency response systems, and often the only provider of emergency medical services for their communities. The majority of ambulance service providers are also small businesses with less than 10 ambulances. Ambulance service providers are a fixture in the community, providing jobs and investment.

Chronic below-cost Medicare reimbursement has hampered the efforts of ambulance service providers to hire new staff, update equipment, and continue to provide services throughout all of their communities.

### **To ensure continued access to ambulance permanent relief and reform, please support legislation in the House and Senate that includes:**

- Permanent 2% increase for services provided in urban areas and 3% increase in rural areas.
- Permanent Medical Modernization Act bonus payment for transports originating in super rural areas.
- Recognition of ambulance services as providers of medical services instead of merely suppliers of transportation.
  - The change is important for setting the stage for future changes to the Medicare ambulance fee schedule such as treat and referral of a patient who does not need transport.
  - Ambulance services are already a covered service under the Medicare program and are reimbursed.
  - The redefinition would not result in any additional reimbursement, as Congress would have to legislate a change in policy.
- Implementing a national prior authorization program for non-emergency basic life support (BLS) dialysis transports to address fraud and abuse with the transportation of dialysis patients.

## **Congressional EMS Caucus**

The EMS Caucus, chaired by Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN), promotes the important function of EMS through policies that improve the ability of EMS practitioners to provide life-saving medical care in emergencies, cost-saving care management in non-emergent situations, and disaster and tactical response at any time.

- EMS strives for zero preventable deaths;
- EMS fills the gaps within our nation's healthcare system;
- EMS is a critical element within our nation's disaster and mass casualty response infrastructure;
- Yet, EMS remains significantly underfunded.

The EMS Caucus will bring a more disciplined focus on these issues and form a more collective and cohesive bipartisan message to support EMS practitioners nationwide. The EMS Caucus will help promote, educate, and increase awareness around the federal policy issues impacting EMS and serve as a resource for policy questions.

*Please thank your Representative if he/she is a member of the Caucus, or invite them to join if not a current member.*