



October 8, 2021

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

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

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

Ground ambulance service organizations and fire departments providing life-saving care across the country are facing unprecedented financial crisis. The shortfall in ambulance funding has been a significant issue, even before the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), in considerable part due to chronic inadequate reimbursement under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule. The PHE has only exacerbated the problem by increasing the disparity between Medicare reimbursement and the costs of providing vital ground ambulance services.

While we greatly appreciate the assistance provided thus far by the Congress to health care providers and first responders to help mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic, it has only partially addressed the immediate funding issue. The long-term chronic underpayment problem has only grown worse. We ask that you safeguard our nation's emergency medical service (EMS) systems during the pandemic, and beyond, by allocating additional Medicare funding for ground ambulance services and preventing further devastating sequestration cuts to health care providers from taking effect.

The American Ambulance Association (AAA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) represent the providers of vital emergency and medically necessary non-emergency ground ambulance services and the paramedics, EMTs and firefighters who deliver the direct medical care and transport for every community across the United States. Our paramedics, emergency medical technicians and firefighters are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are treating, testing and transporting potential COVID-19 patients while also helping to vaccinate underserved communities. It is critical that the Congress allocate additional funding for ground ambulance services in the

short-term through a PHE Medicare provider and supplier increase and maintain current temporary add-on payments for the longer term through the passage of the Preserving Access to Ground Ambulance Medical Services Act (H.R. 2454, S. 2037)

To prevent further sequestration cuts to ground ambulance service organizations and fire departments, we implore the Congress to waive the PAYGO rules and prevent the 4% additional cut to Medicare provider and supplier reimbursement triggered by the American Rescue Plan. We also ask for the continued suspension of the 2% sequestration cut through the duration of the PHE. The addition of a 4% cut for a total of a 6% reduction would require EMS systems to scale back on life-saving emergency ground ambulance services as well as medically necessary non-emergency services at a time when the U.S. continues to see a high number of COVID-19 cases. A 6% cut in Medicare reimbursement would subsequently lead to the deterioration of the infrastructure of our EMS systems and their long-term sustainability. It is therefore imperative that the Congress ensure that more money is allocated for ground ambulance services and not less.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Ambulance Association
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Association of Fire Fighters
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Volunteer Fire Council