



May 10, 2023

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Support for ASPR EMS Workforce Grant**

Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

America's emergency medical services (EMS) agencies are facing an unprecedented crisis. These providers are experiencing crippling staffing challenges that threaten the provision of crucial emergency healthcare services at a time of maximum need.

Insufficient reimbursement for EMS care and lack of federal investment in EMS is a long-term problem that has been building for decades. The additional burdens placed on EMS systems and personnel during the pandemic exacerbated the challenge, pushing many EMS systems in our nation to the breaking point. Most communities are facing crisis-level shortages of EMS personnel, and many communities have seen EMS agencies close altogether, removing this critical community lifeline. The shortage of EMS personnel threatens to undermine our emergency 9-1-1 response infrastructure.

The [2022 Ambulance Employee Workforce Turnover Study by the American Ambulance Association \(AAA\) and Newton 360](#) - the most sweeping survey of its kind involving nearly 20,000 employees working at 258 EMS organizations – found that overall turnover among Paramedics and EMTs ranges from 20-30% percent annually. The exodus of EMS personnel from the profession is happening faster than they can be replaced, compromising our ability to respond to healthcare emergencies, especially in rural and medically underserved parts of the country.

In 2022, [a national survey on EMS workforce engagement and satisfaction](#) found that 9% of respondents had plans to leave the profession within the year, and 18% planned to leave within 3 years. Another 18% planned to be gone within 6 years. In total, 45% of EMS respondents plan on leaving the profession within 6 years. 50% of respondents said they were leaving for a better work-life balance, a response that highlights the strain that so many EMS practitioners have been under due to workforce shortages, long hours and the demands of their jobs.

We call on Congress to ensure that EMS agencies are eligible for and have access to federal grants for workforce development. Many healthcare providers have access to extensive professional development resources and funding opportunities through federal government programs, but these opportunities are not currently available for EMS. Historically, EMS agencies rarely receive federal funding through targeted programs and grants. While Congress may intend that EMS is included, the funds never find their way to EMS agencies at the local level. For example, through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), Congress allocated \$1.5 billion to the Department of Health and Human Services to address the development of the healthcare workforce in the wake of a national shortage of healthcare workers. As EMS was not specifically included in the statutory language, EMS agencies could not access these funds. In addition, funds appropriated for PAPHA programs are not received by EMS. Generally, they are distributed through hospital systems or state or local public health offices and do not reach EMS. Congress must ensure that funds intended for EMS are specifically earmarked for EMS.

Our organizations support the President's FY 2023 Budget call for funding to expand our public health infrastructure workforce, which includes paramedics and EMTs. Specifically, the President's FY 2023 Budget stated that the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) "will use Hospital Preparedness Program [HPP] funds to effectively maintain and strategically serve an expanded recipient pool of healthcare partners who continue to respond to and recover from surges created by COVID-19 and other incidents." Achieving this goal is only possible if the program recognizes and supports the EMS agencies that serve on the front lines of our nation's emergency medical system.

We appreciate the language that Congress included in the FY2023 Consolidated Appropriations instructing ASPR to prioritize the EMS workforce shortage. It stated:

*EMS Preparedness and Response Workforce Shortage Program. — The Committee recognizes that our Nation is facing a crippling EMS workforce shortage which threatens public health and jeopardizes our ability to respond to healthcare emergencies on a timely basis. ASPR should prioritize ensuring a well-trained and adequate ground ambulance services workforce in underserved, rural, and Tribal areas and/or addressing health disparities related to accessing prehospital ground ambulance healthcare services, including critical care transport. (page 228)*

For FY 2024, we request that Congress ensure that ASPR has the funding to implement this program. Specifically, we ask that the ASPR appropriations include language supporting workforce grants for EMS agencies and appropriate \$50 million for ASPR to fund these grants addressing the EMS workforce shortage. Funds would be used to provide grants directly to EMS agencies to support training and retention programs, such as paying for initial training; tuition for community colleges paramedic/EMT training courses; paying for required continuing education courses; supporting costs related to licensure and certification; and supporting individuals in underserved areas with transportation, child care, or similar services to promote accessing training.

Through this grant program, Congress can protect access to EMS response to a call for help through 9-1-1, and ensure that EMS has the capacity to surge during disasters and public health emergencies.

Thank you very much for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

American Ambulance Association  
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians  
National Rural Health Association