

## **Please Extend Medicare Ground Ambulance Add-On Payments**

### **REQUEST**

Please support S. 1643/H.R. 2232, the Protecting Access to Ground Ambulance Medical Services Act of 2025, introduced by Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Susan Collins (R-ME), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), and Peter Welch (D-VT) in the Senate and Reps. Claudia Tenney (R-NY) and Terri Sewell (D-AL) in the House. This bill would extend the add-on payments at their current levels of 2% urban, 3% rural, and 22.6% super rural until December 31, 2027, and support efforts to further raise add-on percentages. These payments are set to expire on September 30, 2025.

### **BACKGROUND**

Ambulance services are a vital component of our local and national health care and emergency response systems and serve as lifelines of care for a wide range of individuals, including seniors who rely on Medicare. Ambulance services across the nation, especially in rural areas, are facing unprecedented fiscal challenges. Medicare currently provides temporary 2% urban, 3% rural, and 22.6% “super rural” add-on payments for ambulance services. These payments are essential to ensuring all patients have access to vital emergency and non-emergency care, but they still do not bring Medicare payment rates up to a level that covers the full cost of providing services.

The cost of the equipment, goods, and services purchased by ambulance services is rising at a rate much faster than general inflation. This includes annual double-digit percentage increases in the price of replacing old ambulances. Years of below-cost Medicare reimbursement have hampered efforts by ambulance services to hire new staff, update equipment, replace aging ambulances, and continue to provide life-saving services in their communities. Ambulance services have closed their doors or been forced to lengthen response times because of the stress on their systems.

The closure and downsizing of hospitals and the shortage of primary care physicians, especially in rural communities, has placed significant new demands on ambulance services. At the same time, the EMS workforce exited the pandemic strained by a depleted number of EMTs and Paramedics and increasing call volume.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Continuing Resolution extended the current Medicare payment add-ons through September 30, 2025. An additional extension through the end of 2027 is necessary to analyze ongoing data collection and reform the ambulance fee schedule.

To learn more or to cosponsor S. 1643, please contact Katherine Huiskes at [Katherine\\_Huiskes@collins.senate.gov](mailto:Katherine_Huiskes@collins.senate.gov) in Sen. Collin’s office or Christina McCauley at [Christina\\_McCauley@Cortezmastomasto.senate.gov](mailto:Christina_McCauley@Cortezmastomasto.senate.gov) in Sen. Cortez Masto’s office.

To learn more or cosponsor H.R. 2232, please contact Jack Boyd in Rep. Tenney's office at [Jack.Boyd@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jack.Boyd@mail.house.gov) or Cameryn Blackmore in Rep. Sewell's office at [Cameryn.Blackmore@mail.house.gov](mailto:Cameryn.Blackmore@mail.house.gov).