



NAEMT Position Statement Equitable Pay and Benefits for EMS

Statement:

NAEMT believes that all EMS practitioners deserve and should receive equitable and adequate compensation that reflects the value of the vital service they provide to their patients and communities, and is on parity with their partners in public safety and other allied health care professions.

NAEMT urges all states to recognize and support funding for EMS as an essential public function and calls on payers and policy makers at the national, state and local levels to transform the payment model for EMS to ensure the sustainability of our EMS workforce.

Background:

Throughout the United States, patients rely on the timely response and professional, competent care provided by our nation's EMS workforce. EMS practitioners, including paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians (AEMTs), emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and emergency medical responders (EMRs) respond to patients in need in often dangerous and austere environments, providing vital medical service for our nation's sick and injured 24-hours a day.

EMS has evolved considerably since 1966, when the federal government recognized the need to build the infrastructure for our nation's EMS system. As community expectations for services have increased over the decades, EMS responsibilities have expanded. Today's EMS practitioners are rigorously trained medical professionals who serve as the frontline healthcare safety net in their communities, providing emergent, urgent and preventive care to all patients in need, and serve a critical role in responding to natural and manmade disasters.

While community needs and expectations have grown, and there has been a commensurate increase in the training and expertise of the EMS workforce, wages and benefits have lagged far below comparable professions in public safety and allied health.

Currently, only 11 states deem EMS as an essential service. Most states do not fund EMS as an essential service in the same way that police and fire services are funded. Moreover, payments for EMS care paid by insurance providers, Medicare and Medicaid are usually less than the cost of providing the care. This current economic model for EMS makes it difficult for EMS agencies to compensate their EMTs and Paramedics based on the value they bring to their patients and local communities, and the nation's healthcare system. Low pay rates, dangerous work environments and challenging work schedules often discourage people interested in a career in EMS. Many who are in the EMS workforce leave the profession to seek higher compensated positions in other professions.

As a result, many communities in our country, both rural and urban, experience chronic shortages in EMS personnel. Rural communities are particularly hard hit.

NAEMT is committed to advocating on behalf of EMS practitioners to ensure they receive equitable compensation that reflects the value of their service to their patients, communities, states and nation.

References:

[Inside the Collapse of Americas Emergency Medical Services](#), NBC News, October 23, 2019

[U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics-Occupational Outlook: EMTs and Paramedics](#), 2019

[Need for EMTs and Paramedics Growing, but finding people to fill jobs isn't easy](#), CNBC, February 1, 2019

[The Pay is Just Not Enough](#), Money, October 31, 2018

Adopted: December 13, 2019