



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OUR NATION'S EMS AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL MUST RECEIVE HELP TO COMBAT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Clinton, Miss. – Across the country, in large urban areas as well as small rural communities, EMTs and paramedics are serving on the frontlines of our nation's war against the COVID-19 pandemic, oftentimes without the necessary supplies and equipment to ensure the safety of their patients and themselves. Emergency medical services (EMS) are responding to increasing calls from patients with suspected or positively diagnosed coronavirus, in addition to 911 calls for patients with severe injuries and illness, including cardiac arrests and strokes. All EMS systems, whether they are public, private or a combination of both, are struggling. The additional burdens placed upon our EMS systems and personnel are challenging even for the strongest systems.

Lack of medical supplies, particularly Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including face masks, gloves, goggles and gowns; ventilators, and other essential medical supplies and medications, is endangering our EMTs and paramedics, their families and colleagues and their patients. EMS personnel are having to utilize improvised or recycled PPE. A growing number of EMTs and paramedics are being infected with the COVID-19 virus, removing their ability to answer 911 calls. Some are fighting for their lives on respirators. While some states have implemented priority testing for their EMS personnel, many have yet to enact this testing.

Congress has passed crucial pandemic relief and stimulus bills in the last couple of weeks, however, none of this legislation has provided funding relief or protection to our nation's EMTs and paramedics. Funds to support the pandemic response are being provided to state government and/or hospitals. EMS agencies are not receiving funds or supplies for their EMS personnel. In some communities, EMS is on the brink of collapse.

Matt Zavadsky, President of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, stated, "The EMS community commends and appreciates the efforts of Congress and the Administration to support states as they respond to the pandemic. However, our profession is deeply disappointed and concerned with the lack of recognition by federal and state leaders of the care provided by EMTs and paramedics, the role of EMS in the pandemic response, and the absence of financial support to EMS through any of the bills that have been passed by Congress to date. We call on our federal leaders in Congress and in the White House to address this oversight as soon as possible. EMS is at a breaking point and we need government support. The continuation of EMS care to patients depends on it."

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What can communities do to help?

Communities can help support their EMS agencies and personnel during the pandemic by

- contributing any unused PPE (masks, goggles, gloves) and cleaning supplies to help care for patients,
- donating take-out food from local restaurants,
- adhering to CDC guidance for preventing the spread of COVID-19,
- following state and municipal stay-at-home regulations, and
- contacting your state and federal elected leaders to ensure that EMS receives the needed support to continue to care for patients.

About NAEMT

Formed in 1975 and more than 72,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians is the only national association representing the professional interests of all emergency and mobile healthcare practitioners, including emergency medical technicians, advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders, paramedics, advanced practice paramedics, critical care paramedics, flight paramedics, community paramedics, and mobile integrated healthcare practitioners. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military.

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