



Jefferson County Emergency Medical Services District

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"We are the Warmth of Promise"

Chair Nathanson
Members of the House Committee on Revenue
District 55
900 Court St. NE H-395
Salem, OR 97301

April 24, 2019

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee Members;

I am the Chief of the Jefferson County EMS District, and a member of the Oregon State Ambulance Association (OSAA). As you may have heard, the OSAA is pursuing a program in the 2019 Session which would increase Medicaid reimbursements for non-public EMS providers in the state through a federal matching program. Notably, public providers have asked not to be included in the program because they already have access to a similar program, GEMT. Last year, CMS decided that the GEMT program is not available to non-public providers.

Following this CMS decision, OSAA began to look at other options for the other kinds of EMS providers, and we found a good example in California. Their legislature passed an ambulance Quality Assurance Fee (QAF) program in 2017 with SB 523. It is a 5% fee on all emergency transports. Of that 5%, 10% is held back and given to the state to administer the program. The rest of the funds go to the federal government, receive a federal match, and comes back to the participating providers via increased Medicaid reimbursement for the participating provider class.

In Oregon, those figures work out to be substantial—our modeling shows that participating providers would pay out about \$34 per emergency transport, and with the federal match would receive an additional \$287 in reimbursement for their Medicaid calls.

While these figures may not sound significant, they absolutely are—especially to volunteer, and more rural providers who have larger Medicaid populations in their patient mix, but do not have the same call volume to help pay for hard overhead costs like vehicles and their maintenance. In my area of the state, my agency provides billing services for Warm Springs Fire & Safety, Fossil

Ambulance and soon, Spray Ambulance. I anticipate that this program will be of great benefit to these agencies, and I hope you will support this program that will be of great benefit to Oregon's rural providers who do not have access to other cost-recouping mechanisms, such as GEMT.

Thank you,

Michael K. Lepin, BA, P
Chief