

March 22, 2021

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2910**

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Representatives Alonso Leon, Campos, Dexter, Drazan, Moore-Green, Noble, and Schouten,

- AOC supports House Bill 2910 and the Dash-1 amendment because the bill will increase access to emergency services by bringing federal dollars into the EMS system, and through the creation of a private-provider funded innovative ambulance program grant program, which will be accessible to all kinds of EMS providers.
- The problem: Low Medicaid reimbursements do not cover the cost to provide EMS care.
- In 2016, the Oregon Legislature attempted to address this problem by passing House Bill 4030, which allowed Oregon to petition with CMS to participate in a federal program called GEMT - which is designed to close the gap between what it costs to provide care, and low Medicaid reimbursement. Unfortunately, CMS only approved the program for some kinds of EMS providers (public providers).
- The solution: House Bill 2910 creates a program that will be accessible to the rest of EMS providers who were left out by this CMS decision - private EMS providers, who do roughly 70% of all emergency transports in Oregon. This type of program is in place and operational in surrounding states - meaning, Oregon is leaving federal money on the table today.
- Counties have the ability to select their ambulance providers, and AOC supports legislation that will “lift all boats” - especially when it will cost nothing for state and local governments, as is the case with HB 2910 and the Dash-1 amendment.
- Counties have always appreciated their partnerships with EMS providers - but the events of 2020 have made the need for a healthy EMS system even more clear. From COVID response, to wildfires to ice storms, counties have relied on and partnered with EMS in significant ways.

Sincerely,



Rob Bovett  
Legal Counsel and Legislative Director  
Association of Oregon Counties

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