



# Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers

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## **Testimony of Greg Allard, President**

**Re: H.B. No. 6439- AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.**

*Concerning*

### **Department of Social Services Budget- Ambulance Funding**

Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services Public Hearing, March 3, 2021

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Greg Allard, and I am the President of the Association of Connecticut Ambulance Providers and Vice President of American Ambulance Service in Norwich. Thank you today for the opportunity to offer my testimony today regarding HB6439- An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023 and Making Appropriations Thereof.

The pandemic has created unique challenges for Emergency Medical Service providers. In the height of the pandemic, providers across the state have had to treat most individuals and trips as COVID presumptive cases and dealt with a much lower call volume created by a variety of factors. Unlike many other providers, there was no specific financial assistance offered to EMS providers and no ability to make up for those losses despite the significant cost increases and lower call volume.

Unfortunately, what we have seen is an unprecedented environment. EMS services are still critically needed but the healthcare system as a whole is relying on them less due to a substantial decrease in the volume of surgeries and other elective medical procedures, a decrease in 911 emergencies, and a higher rate of patients refusing transport to hospitals. Despite the volume decline, costs for each transport increased during the pandemic. Each call required a significant amount of vehicle sterilization time, additional expenditures associated with increased cleaning of our facility and loads of PPE. Staffing was also an issue. With the random necessary quarantening of paramedics and EMT, we incurred additional costs of overtime for staff.

Even now with vaccines increasing and virus numbers going down the year-to-year call volume is still down. We take a financial loss everytime we transport Medicaid patients making this situation even worse. As the cost of each trip went up during the pandemic the underfunding was exacerbated. Our members are Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) providers and during the pandemic



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EMS providers stepped up and took COVID positive Medicaid patients when other modes of transport were not equipped or trained to respond in the midst of the pandemic.

The pandemic not only challenged costs but the system as a whole. As EMS organizations we have required staffing levels dependent on our service area and we need the call volume to support the staff that are at the ready for emergency responses. While the Medicaid NEMT rate is not sufficient for these transports, significant reductions in NEMT transports increase our losses and challenge our ability to have staff available meet our emergency transport obligations.

We know the pandemic has changed the way healthcare is delivered and as such the state needs to ensure the Emergency Medical Services system is ready to respond in an emergency situation.

**We urge you to support Emergency Medical Services and increase Medicaid rates for EMS providers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony today.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory B. Allard  
President, Association of CT Ambulance Providers  
Vice President, American Ambulance Service, Inc.