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House Committee for Health, Insurance and Environment
Representative Beth McCann, Committee Chair
200 East Colfax
Denver, Colorado 80203

RE: HB 15-1151, Floor for Medicaid Provider Rates

Honorable Beth McCann,

Please support and vote for HB 15-1151, Floor for Medicaid Provider Rates by Representative Rankin and Senator Lambert. Colorado EMS Chiefs, Managers and Directors (CEMSCMD) supports this vital piece of legislation and believe it to be essential to ensuring continued patient access to lifesaving EMS services and improving EMS agency financial sustainability.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a non-excludable essential community service. All around Colorado paramedics, EMTs and other first responders, both paid and volunteer respond to and care for persons experiencing medical and trauma emergencies. They are equipped and trained to provide the best possible patient care whenever and wherever care is needed 24/7/365. However, providing good patient care and ultimately paying for good care are two different things. Costs of EMS operations are rising but payments from insurance, patients, Medicare and Medicaid are declining. Many EMS agencies, especially in rural areas, are struggling to survive. Some are already reducing services or closing.

Agencies that provide EMS in Colorado are already experiencing dramatic increases in patients insured by Medicaid. Medicaid is the fastest growing insured program in Colorado. Medicaid expansion and its chronic under cost payments to EMS agencies jeopardize EMS agency financial sustainability and continued patient access to EMS Services.

- 80 to 85% of EMS agency costs are "readiness costs" associated with having trained, equipped and staffed ambulances ready and waiting to respond to emergency calls;
- Chronic under cost Medicaid payments undermines EMS services provided to ALL patients;
- Only 9% of current transport costs are paid by Medicaid;
- Average transport cost are \$1,224 and Medicaid payments are only \$113; and,
- HB 15-1151 almost doubles Medicaid payments paid to EMS agencies.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Your support for HB 15-1151 is needed now and your affirmative vote is critical to advancing this bill. Improved Medicaid funding for EMS agencies would enhance EMS agency financial sustainability and better ensure continued patient access to vital EMS services.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Dienst, President

Copies to:

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