



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NAEMT President Urges U.S. Senate To Pass S. 2932 To Protect Patients' Rights To Emergency Medication**

Conrad "Chuck" Kearns submitted the following Op-Ed to national and local media.

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#### ***Following passage in the U.S. House, NAEMT President urges Senate to pass legislation to protect patients' rights to emergency medication***

As our national and local news media have been reporting, communities across our country are suffering from an epidemic of opioid addiction. Our federal leaders have been working on ways to respond. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has enacted rules designed to prevent drugs from getting into the hands of those who would sell these drugs on the streets of our communities. Unfortunately, the DEA rules also inhibit the ability of ambulance services to provide life-saving and pain-alleviating drugs to patients suffering medical emergencies.

Currently, ambulance services fulfill their mission to save lives and alleviate pain through licensed physician medical directors who issue standing orders that enable EMS professionals to administer life-saving controlled substances to patients with emergency medical conditions. If the DEA rules are enacted, standing orders will not be allowed. Medical directors would need to issue specific prescriptions for each emergency patient. Administration of emergency medication would be delayed or possibly prevented through this new requirement. In emergency situations, every moment counts and can mean the difference between life and death.

In response, Congress is trying to pass legislation to continue to allow EMS medical directors to issue standing orders for emergency medication, while still allowing the DEA to prevent diversion of controlled substances. In 2015, U.S. Representative Richard Hudson (NC) introduced legislation in the House to address this issue. The House voted to pass this legislation on November 14. We thank Rep. Hudson and his colleagues in the House who came together in a spirit of bi-partisanship to pass this important bill.

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Earlier this year, U.S. Senators Bill Cassidy (LA) and Michael Bennet (CO) introduced similar legislation in the Senate (S. 2932). We greatly appreciate Senators Cassidy's and Bennet's bi-partisan leadership on this bill. NAEMT strongly urges swift passage of S. 2932 by the full Senate during this current congressional session. NAEMT applauds the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP) for championing this legislation on behalf of EMS agencies, practitioners and their patients.

With passage in the Senate, this legislation can be signed into law by the U.S. President before the end of the year. We ask the public to contact your U.S. Senators and urge them to pass S. 2932 to allow EMS professionals to continue serving our vulnerable emergency medical patients and providing the best possible care to those who need immediate life-saving pain medications.

Conrad T. "Chuck" Kearns, MBA, Paramedic, A-EMD  
President, NAEMT

#### **About NAEMT**

Formed in 1975 and more than 55,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the only national association representing the professional interests of all emergency and mobile 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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