



February 4, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

As the Congress considers a supplemental funding package to address the ongoing COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE), please include additional funding for vital ground ambulance services. We also urge you to extend the moratorium on the 2% Medicare sequestration cut on Medicare providers and suppliers.

The American Ambulance Association (AAA), Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), and National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) represent the providers of vital emergency and non-emergency ground ambulance services and the paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and firefighters who deliver the direct medical care and transport for every community across the United States. We have all experienced the strain from the pandemic on our services and need additional financial assistance and support as we remain the frontline responders to our nation's coronavirus patients.

### **Provider Relief Fund – \$25 Billion in Additional Funds**

Our paramedics, EMTs and firefighters, as well as the organizations that they serve, take on substantial risk every day to treat, transport, and test potential COVID-19 patients, and play a vital role in providing vaccinations to individuals in their homes. Ground ambulance service organizations and fire departments, however, urgently need additional money added to the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) to help offset the increased costs and lower reimbursement resulting from our vital response to the pandemic.

We greatly appreciate the funding that ground ambulance service organizations and fire departments have already received from the Provider Relief Fund. The funds have been a lifeline for

many of our respective members and their ability to continue to serve their communities. However, as the Phase 4 distribution of funds demonstrated, more funding is needed beyond any unspent money remaining in the Fund. Our members indicate the funds they received in Phase 4 covered approximately 50% of their lost reimbursement and increased costs from July 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, whereas previous distributions were closer to 88%. We therefore respectfully request that the Congress allocate an additional \$25 billion to the Provider Relief Fund to cover higher costs and lost reimbursement since March 31, 2021, associated with the Delta and Omicron variants.

Should you move forward with additional funding for ground ambulance service organizations, we request that the funds be distributed in a similar manner as the Tranche 1 distribution from the PRF. The automatic, across-the-board deposit of funding was especially helpful for small and rural ground ambulance service agencies. These rural agencies provide care in underserved areas and are often daunted even by an abbreviated application process. To ensure equity for all communities, we support universal direct deposit.

Furthermore, if the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) utilizes automatic payments again, we encourage HHS to make these payments based on the National Provider Identification (NPI) number of the ground ambulance service organization or department rather than Tax ID Number (TIN). In the case of moderate and large cities, many municipal departments may share a TIN while maintaining distinct NPIs. Providing these payments according to TIN may unintentionally commingle funds intended for different departments such as fire departments, public health departments, and local government-run hospitals or clinics.

#### **Sequestration – Further Delay 2% Cut**

We also thank the Congress for further extending the moratorium on the 2% sequestration cut to Medicare providers and suppliers. Our costs of operating have increased exponentially in response to COVID-19, as we maintain full readiness to combat the pandemic and continue to provide 24-hour vital non-COVID-19-related services. Our costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), overtime pay, and other expenses directly related to COVID-19 remain high. At a time when we need additional funding more than ever and not less, we respectfully urge you extend the moratorium on the entire 2% until the end of 2022.

Thank you in advance for continuing to help ensure that ground ambulance service organizations and fire departments and our paramedics, EMTs and firefighters have the resources necessary to continue caring for our patients in their moment of greatest need, while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining the short and long-term viability of EMS in America.

Sincerely,  
American Ambulance Association  
Congressional Fire Services Institute  
International Association of Fire Chiefs  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians  
National Volunteer Fire Council