



March 21, 2024

The Honorable Mariannette Miller-Meeks
Chairwoman
Committee on Veterans Affairs
Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Julia Brownley
Ranking Member
Committee on Veterans Affairs
Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Miller-Meeks and Ranking Member Brownley:

You have the full endorsement of our organizations in support of the VA Emergency Transportation Access Act (H.R. 5530). H.R. 5530 would protect access for veterans to essential 9-1-1 emergency and urgent interfacility ground ambulance services. Our organizations look forward to continuing to work with you to enact this bill into law.

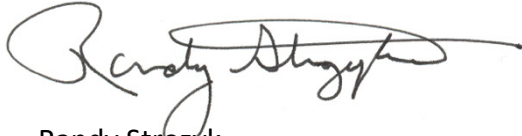
Under the final rule entitled *Changes in Rates VA Pays for Special Modes of Transportation*, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) would reimburse for non-contracted ground ambulance services at the lesser of the actual charge or Medicare ambulance rates. As demonstrated by two Government Accountability Office reports and acknowledged by the Congress through legislating temporary add-on payments, Medicare rates are below the cost of providing ground ambulance services. Basing reimbursement on Medicare rates would deteriorate the ability of ground ambulance service organizations to provide critical and often lifesaving ground ambulance services to veterans and entire communities. We greatly appreciate the approach outlined in H.R. 5530 to protect ambulance access for veterans and establish a process to help ensure a more fair and equitable reimbursement rate.

The American Ambulance Association (AAA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) represent the providers of vital emergency 9-1-1 and urgent interfacility ground ambulance services and the paramedics emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who deliver the direct medical care and transport for every community across the United States. Our paramedics, EMTs and firefighters are on the front lines of providing vital health care to our veterans.

We thank the Subcommittee for holding a hearing on the VA Emergency Transportation Access Act and highlighting ground ambulance service organizations, our paramedics, EMTs and firefighters and the veterans and communities we serve.

Please do not hesitate to continue to reach out to our organizations for our assistance in helping pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Randy Strozyk
President
American Ambulance Association



John S. Butler
President and Board Chair
International Association of Fire Chiefs



Susan Bailey
President
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians