



May 3, 2024

The Honorable Brad Wenstrup
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Terri Sewell
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Buddy Carter
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Wenstrup, Sewell, Carter and Tonko,

On behalf of the members of our respective organizations, thank you for spearheading efforts in the U.S. House of Representatives to extend the temporary ambulance add-on payments. Our organizations continue to strongly support your legislation, the Protecting Access to Ground Ambulance Medical Services Act of 2023 (H.R. 1666), and we look forward to working further with you on the extension becoming law.

H.R. 1666 would extend the add-on payments for another three years until data is available from the Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System which Congress can use to reform the Medicare ambulance fee schedule. Ground ambulance service organizations providing life-saving care across the country are facing unprecedented financial crisis. For many ground ambulance service organizations especially those providing services in underserved and rural areas, the add-on payments help determine whether they are able to keep their doors open.

Extending the current law add-ons is critical, but we also request that Congress increase the add-ons (above current law levels) to address persistent funding shortfalls in ambulance reimbursement and ensure continued access to emergency medical services (EMS) in all communities. In reports in 2007 and 2012, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that Medicare on average reimbursed ground ambulance service organizations below the costs of providing medical transport services when the add-on payments are not taken into account. Since the last report, the disparity between Medicare reimbursement and the costs of providing services has significantly increased with reductions in Medicare reimbursement and increased costs for labor, ambulances, facility maintenance, equipment, and supplies. It is crucial that percentages of the add-on payments be increased to sustain ground ambulance service organizations until Congress can act to reform the payment system.

The American Ambulance Association (AAA), National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) and National Rural Health Association (NRHA) represent providers of vital emergency and medically necessary non-emergency ground ambulance services and the paramedics, EMTs, and rural health professionals who lead and deliver direct medical care and transport across the United States. Our paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and rural health care professionals are on the front lines of providing vital medical care.

Again, thank you for championing Medicare ambulance relief for ground ambulance services.

Sincerely,

American Ambulance Association
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Rural Health Association