



April 21, 2025

To the Members of the New York State Legislature

Medicaid Ambulance Payments in the NYS Executive Budget for SFY 2025-2026

EMS continues to be at risk in many communities due to Medicaid payment shortfalls. The inadequacy of Medicaid payment is a large factor in the perilous situation facing New York EMS organizations today. The New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA), United NY Ambulance Network (UNYAN), and New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) are grateful that the NYS Senate included funding to improve ambulance payment rates in their one house budget for SFY 2025-2026.

We urge the inclusion of the \$20 million included by the Senate in the final budget agreement. This funding will be an important step in closing the gap between Medicaid ambulance payment rates and the corresponding Medicare rate.

EMS services are paid far less than it costs to deliver care when we treat and transport a Medicaid beneficiary. As shared previously, Medicaid rates cover only 40% of our cost of delivering emergency ambulance service and New York's fee schedule payments are significantly less than those in the five States contiguous to New York.

Our deficit on every Medicaid transport is continuously increasing because the cost of the equipment, goods, and services purchased by ambulance services is rising at a rate much faster than general inflation. Government payment shortfalls inhibit our ability to strengthen the EMS responder workforce and maintain ambulance access for communities. Despite our crucial role in public safety and our commitment to responding 24-7-365, the Medicaid program currently exacerbates our weakness.

We would be thankful for the inclusion of the \$20 million in ambulance rates increases as part of the multi-billion-dollar investment in health care providers in this budget through rate increases, capital investment, and sustainability programs.

Medicaid payments that are closer to costs would increase the number of active NYS certified EMS responders. EMTs and Paramedics receive extensive training, work in high-risk and high-stress

situations and have responsibility for the well-being of the people they serve. Yet, agencies that employ EMTs and Paramedics can't afford to pay adequate wages when struggling to make ends meet.

We have previously sent you a background paper "Close the Medicaid Payment Gap to Get Closer to the Cost of Delivering Care in the 2025-2026 NYS Budget". We thank you in advance for your consideration. Please direct questions to Andrea DeBow at adebow@elkstreetgroup.com, Ryan Gregoire at rgregoire@nysac.org, and Steven Kroll at legislation@nysvara.org.

Sincerely,

Tim Egan, Chairperson
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Henry Ehrhardt, President
NYS Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Assn.

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