



TESTIMONY TO VETERAN'S
AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

April 20, 2017

Raphael M. Barishansky
rbarishan@pa.gov

Thank you, Chairman Barrar, Chairman Sainato and members of the committee for providing the Department the time and opportunity to outline some thoughts and strategies regarding our emergency medical services (EMS) system, specifically regarding House Bill 1013.

As this committee is aware, the EMS system in the Commonwealth is facing many challenges and has for years. One of the more critical challenges is the need for EMS agencies to retain a level of preparedness to respond to the variety of emergencies seen daily across the Commonwealth. This includes both medical and traumatic emergencies as well as Mass-Casualty Incidents, all which EMS must be ready to respond to at a moment's notice. This readiness comes at a cost, regarding personnel, vehicles, and supplies, as well as other areas.

To retain this level of readiness, and to recoup costs for the services they deliver, the clear majority of EMS agencies in the Commonwealth bill their patients for the costs of services provided. This includes bandages, oxygen masks, intravenous supplies, medications and the list goes on. However, with extremely limited exception, insurance companies will only reimburse EMS agencies when a patient is transported to a recognized acute care facility. This means that any medical intervention delivered by EMS providers in a situation where the patient does not require transport or the patient refuses to be transported, results in a circumstance where the EMS agency is effectively unable to recoup their own costs. Clearly, this is a less than optimal situation for EMS agencies to be in, as they attempt to remain financially solvent.

The introduction of House Bill 1013 provides a path for EMS agencies to potentially recoup the costs of readiness as well as the costs for those instances when an emergency response is necessary but a patient is not transported.

As always, I appreciate your time as well as your on-going support of our EMS system and will gladly answer any questions you may have.