

Professional Ambulance Association of Wisconsin: First responders thank the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance for their support of EMS

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The Professional Ambulance Association of Wisconsin (PAAW) would like to thank the members of the Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance for their efforts to provide a significant Medicaid rate increase to Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The PAAW board extends its deepest appreciation to Representative Amy Loudbeck (R-Clinton), Representative Mark Born (R- Beaver Dam), Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc), Senator Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma), Senator Howard Marklein (R- Spring Green), and Senator Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon) for their leadership on this crucial public health and public safety issue.

To secure the increase in the Medicaid reimbursement rate for EMS in Wisconsin, the budget bill must pass both houses of the State Legislature and be signed by Governor Evers.

"Wisconsin's EMS system is vulnerable right now," said Chris Anderson, President of PAAW. "The reimbursement levels for mobile healthcare fall far below ambulance providers' costs of readiness. This has suppressed wages, escalating our workforce shortage and causing delays in service. The action taken by the Joint Finance Committee this week would nearly double our reimbursement rates in 2022. This increase—if passed by the full Legislature and signed by the Governor—would represent a lifeline for our first responders."

Anderson continued, "EMS proudly served our community with frontline emergency healthcare throughout the COVID-19 pandemic despite extraordinarily challenging

circumstances. Between skyrocketing costs for PPE, supplies, and training, coupled with dwindling reimbursement, EMS cannot continue to provide care to every citizen without sustainable reimbursement. We are depending on the support of our elected officials so that your community can continue to depend on us—24/7.”