



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Office of the Chief

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Thomas E. Coe, Chief

BILL: Senate Bill 295
TITLE: Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Medical Service Transporters
-Reimbursement
HEARING DATE: February 8, 2022
POSITION: FAVORABLE
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
CONTACT: Chief Thomas E. Coe,
Director, Division of Fire & Rescue Services, Frederick County

Frederick County's Division of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) strongly supports Senate Bill 295, which will update reimbursement rates within the Maryland Medical Assistance Program. Updating these rates will better reflect the complex health care services Emergency Medical Services (EMS) transporters provide and adequately fund the high level of medical care delivered by well-trained staff.

DFRS provides critical life safety services to the citizens of and visitors to Frederick County, employing 500 uniformed personnel, sixteen civilian personnel and hundreds of volunteer responders to serve the over 240,000 residents of Frederick County who reside over the 664 square miles of the jurisdiction.

Since the last update of the EMS transport reimbursement rate within the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, demand for EMS services have steadily increased, not just as a result of population growth, but because of the growing spectrum of medical issues that must be addressed.

EMS units have been called upon to furnish a growing list of medical services and increasingly complex health care to meet ever-expanding needs. EMS operations have evolved to deliver medical care to patients when and where they need it, treating patients in their homes and in the field, in addition to transporting them to health care providers beyond traditional hospital emergency rooms.

The current outdated reimbursement formula does not reimburse this immediate care in the field, which sometimes enables a patient to avoid a trip to the emergency room and to receive additional care in a more appropriate environment. The current reimbursement also does not reimburse for transport to alternative health care sites, such as an urgent care provider.

Importantly, EMS functions as the public's emergency safety net and must be supported in order to contribute fully to and in integrated way with the entire health care system.