



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

February 8, 2022

Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Kelley:

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service wishes to express its support for SB 295 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Emergency Service Transporters - Reimbursement. As drafted, the bill proposes changes to the rate of reimbursement to county, city, and volunteer fire and rescue departments across the State and removes the requirement to transport patients to a hospital emergency department to receive Medicaid reimbursement. The bill further requires that beginning in fiscal year 2023, the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) must increase the amount of reimbursement for transportation and medical services by \$25 each fiscal year until the reimbursement rate is at least \$300.

For many jurisdictions and small departments, including Montgomery County, Medicaid and Medicare patients make up a sizeable portion of their emergency responses. For years, the Medicaid reimbursement rate has been set at \$100 per patient. Even when that rate was established, the cost per transport was many times more than the allowable Medicaid reimbursement. Since that time, the costs for ambulances, fuel, equipment, labor, and training have risen faster than the overall cost of living. Maryland's small and large fire and rescue departments are here to serve the public good. The artificially low reimbursement rate to transport Medicaid patients, however, has made it very difficult to serve the residents and visitors to the State.

Senate Bill 295 is a simple, effective, and reasonable solution that will support jurisdictions and organizations by increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rate to better reflect the actual costs of providing emergency transport service. It will provide a significant step toward improving the financial stability of Maryland's fire and rescue departments. Additionally, by removing the condition of "transporting the program recipient to a facility,"

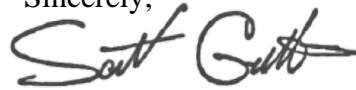
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SB 295 recognizes and addresses the evolving world of mobile integrated health in which some healthcare is provided in the home rather than in a hospital emergency department. The requirement to transport patients to a facility to receive reimbursement is a disincentive for ambulances to provide in-home or telehealth medicine. This bill acknowledges that and removes it, thereby increasing the opportunity for innovative clinical care, and likely reducing the total number of patients transported to the State's strained emergency departments.

For these reasons, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service supports SB 295 and urges that the Committee adopt a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Goldstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Scott" and last name "Goldstein" clearly distinguishable.

Scott Goldstein, Fire Chief
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service