

Members of the Appropriations Committee - You have two similar, but competing, proposals for consideration regarding critical support for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). These recommendations came from the findings of the Blue Ribbon Commission that EMS in the State of Maine was in serious trouble because of poor reimbursement, a declining workforce, and increasing demand. One of their recommendations was that EMS needed a cash infusion of 70 million dollars per year for 5 years to help them get their head above water and start rebuilding their infrastructure while pushing for better reimbursement and a more efficient delivery system. The recommendation was for the money to go directly to Licensed EMS services; not Maine EMS office operations, not training centers, and not regions. There are certainly other areas in the Maine EMS system that need attention, but, right now, our ability to respond to emergencies and transfer patients is being impacted. There was also no discussion about long and involved application processes to prove that they "needed" the money. Our EMS services that respond to 911 calls lose money on every call, estimated at \$400 per call for urban services and \$2000 per call for rural services. They have already completed their "need" assessment by working long hours for terrible pay under extreme conditions to respond when called. Once the Bills were submitted, the 70 million was pared down to 31 million with the hope that we could find some other funding mechanisms to make up the difference and start us down the path of long-term sustainability.

We desperately need your help, and we need the complete 31 million dollar allocation to be sent out immediately upon adoption and signing using the formula developed by the Maine Ambulance Association and presented to the Blue Ribbon Commission. There has been a request process, criteria for which the money can be used, and a reporting requirement proposed that addresses the accountability concern.

Please consider allocating the entire 31 million to where it is desperately needed, Licensed EMS agencies.

Thank you for your consideration

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ENHANCING THE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES