



## Vermont Ambulance Association

C/O 275 Stratton Rd.  
Rutland, VT 05701

January 27, 2016

Members of Senate Healthcare Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with the committee. We appreciate the ability to share our concerns about Vermont's EMS system.

Important points you should know:

1. The recent report on Medicaid funding rates for ambulances compares Vermont's rates to other states. It does not evaluate the cost of delivering the service. GAO data attached shows the costs from \$469-\$545
2. Ambulance services are reimbursed at 42% of federal rates even though other providers in the state are at rates that are more than 80%.
3. Health care has changed. Vermont ambulances provide high level care for both emergencies and hospital transports. Most items involved in treatment of patients are disposable. Expensive supplies are not reimbursed even under the supply codes listed in Commissioner Costantino's report which is why the payments in those categories are so low. Examples of high cost items that are not reimbursable.
  - i. Intraosseous needle - \$110
  - ii. CPAP mask - \$80
  - iii. ETCO2 monitors
  - iv. Medications \$2-300 a dose
4. The code A0998 for billing for treatment without transport, is a code that services cannot get guidance on how to bill, we learned of this code from the report. According to the report \$0 was billed under this code. A lot of treatment for overdose and diabetes does not result in transport to the hospital so services pay for all of the medication and disposables used during treatment.
5. The current mental health and substance abuse crisis has hit Vermont ambulance services particularly hard. Call volume has increased, Narcan is used regularly and has doubled in price without reimbursement. Requests for mental health transfers has increased, these are our lowest paid calls at \$97.65 per transport.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration,

Drew Hazelton  
VAA Legislative Committee Chair  
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