



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Steve Novick, Commissioner

February 1, 2016

Representative Mitch Greenlick, Chair
House Committee on Health Care
900 NE Court Street, HR E
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Greenlick and Members of the Committee:

I write in support of HB 4030 which will close the reimbursement gap for public Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers.

Every firefighter in the City of Portland is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) trained to provide basic life support, including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid. With over 150 firefighters certified as paramedics, Portland Fire and Rescue is the largest provider of pre-hospital care in Oregon. 70% of all calls to which Portland firefighters respond are medical in nature.

Like all Oregonians, Medicaid patients rely on Oregon's EMS system when they need emergency medical care and transport to a medical facility. Today, more than 1 million Oregonians receive care through the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), Oregon's Medicaid program. Enrollment in the OHP has increased 71 percent since 2013. As a result, the reimbursement rate for the care and transport of OHP individuals is far below the cost of providing these services, placing an increasingly greater financial burden on the EMS system, Portland Fire and Rescue, and ultimately taxpayers.

Like Oregon's provider tax, Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) draws funds from the federally-backed Medicaid entitlement program, allowing public EMS providers the ability to collect a percentage (64%) of their uncompensated costs for providing care to Medicaid patients. GEMT is the first step for Oregon's public EMS providers to gain eligibility for federal reimbursement and close the reimbursement gap.

I urge your support for HB 4030.

Sincerely,

Erin A. Janssens

Erin A. Janssens
Fire Chief
Portland Fire and Rescue