



## ASK

Support legislation to increase the Medicaid reimbursement rates to help sustain EMS in Wisconsin.

## Increase Medicaid Reimbursement Rates for EMS

In 2007 and 2012, the Federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) released reports<sup>1</sup> which demonstrated that Medicare reimburses ambulance service providers below the actual cost of providing those services. These reports likely underestimated the financial difficulties facing ambulance service providers—as they did not take into account several critical factors<sup>2</sup>.

In order to offset the below-cost reimbursements, Medicare offers a temporary relief to ambulance services, in which they provide a 2% urban, 3% rural, or 22.6% super rural add-on payment for each ambulance transport. In addition, **Medicare has had annual adjustments** to reflect the cost of providing Healthcare for at least the past 15 years.

By comparison, Medicaid reimbursements in Wisconsin are a fraction of Medicare rates for the same type of call or transport—41% of Medicare rates for clinical services. In addition, Wisconsin **Medicaid has had no increases in reimbursement rates in 12 years**, since a 1% increase in January, 2008.

These meager and stagnant reimbursement rates are contributing to an ever-increasing financial problem for all ambulance services in the state: whether volunteer or career, municipal or private, these unfair payments are causing an incredible strain on a fragile EMS system. The Wisconsin legislature has identified recruitment and retention as a critical need for EMS, and **starving the services financially** is compounding that need.

Several stakeholder groups are working to research reimbursement rates nationwide, in order to create a proposal for a fair and equitable rate for EMS Medicaid reimbursements. Those stakeholder groups include the Professional Ambulance Association of Wisconsin (PAAW), the Wisconsin EMS Association (WEMSA), and the Wisconsin State Fire Chief's Association (WSFCA). These organizations represent more than 18,000 Wisconsin EMS professionals, and over 425 transporting ambulance services.

The table on the next page shows the current reimbursement rates for Medicaid and Medicare. It projects the reimbursement amounts if they were increased to 80% and 100% of Medicare reimbursements. At 100%, the total increase would amount to just under \$15 million more in costs, and since Wisconsin pays only 40% of Medicaid costs, that means that the State budget would only be raised by \$6 million. This increase would provide breathing

room for ambulance services around the state struggling with keeping their doors open, and responding to 9-1-1 calls from their neighbors.

### 2019 Medicare/Medicaid Allowable Amounts:

	T18 HCPCS		MEDICARE FEE SCHEDULE	MEDICAID FEE SCHEDULE	Current % of Medicare	80% of Medicare	100% of Medicare
<b>BLS NON-EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0428)</b>	URBAN	\$227.45	\$94.90	41.72%	\$181.96	\$227.45
		RURAL	\$229.68	\$94.90	41.32%	\$183.74	\$229.68
<b>BLS EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0429)</b>	URBAN	\$363.92	\$151.84	41.72%	\$291.14	\$363.92
		RURAL	\$367.49	\$151.84	41.32%	\$293.99	\$367.49
<b>ALS 1 NON-EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0426)</b>	URBAN	\$272.94	\$113.88	41.72%	\$218.35	\$272.94
		RURAL	\$275.62	\$113.88	41.32%	\$220.50	\$275.62
<b>ALS 1 EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0427)</b>	URBAN	\$432.15	\$180.31	41.72%	\$345.72	\$432.15
		RURAL	\$436.39	\$180.31	41.32%	\$349.11	\$436.39
<b>ALS 2 EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0433)</b>	URBAN	\$625.49	\$260.97	41.72%	\$500.39	\$625.49
		RURAL	\$631.62	\$260.97	41.32%	\$505.30	\$631.62
<b>SCT EMERGENCY BASE</b>	<b>(A0434)</b>	URBAN	\$739.21	\$308.42	41.72%	\$591.37	\$739.21
		RURAL	\$746.46	\$308.42	41.32%	\$597.17	\$746.46
<b>BLS MILEAGE</b>	<b>(A0380)* (A0425)</b>	URBAN	\$7.55	\$5.56	73.64%	\$6.04	\$7.55
		RURAL	\$7.62	\$5.56	72.97%	\$6.10	\$7.62
<b>ALS MILEAGE</b>	<b>(A0390)* (A0425)</b>	URBAN	\$7.55	\$5.56	73.64%	\$6.04	\$7.55
		RURAL	\$7.62	\$5.56	72.97%	\$6.10	\$7.62

<sup>1</sup> Government Accountability Office reports GAO-07-383 and GAO-13-6

<sup>2</sup> The expiration of temporary GPCI add-ons, productivity adjustments, a new fractional mileage policy, or changes in fuel costs, equipment costs, vehicle costs, and wages.

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