



August 7, 2017

Charles Smith, Executive Commissioner  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78751-2316

Dear Commissioner Smith:

We are writing to express our concern with the proposed Medicaid cuts for ground ambulance services in the biennial review. Ambulances provide vital 911 services to our communities, and in many rural areas, ground ambulances serve as a safety net by providing their only access to emergency medical care. As such, we strongly believe that it is critical for the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to, at minimum, keep Medicaid ambulance rates stable.

Medicaid covers the cost for many ambulance services across the state. It makes up approximately twenty percent of the payer mix in most urban communities, and over thirty percent in rural communities. The current Medicaid payment rates for ground ambulances, which are already well below Medicare payment rates (Texas Medicaid pays sixty-seven percent of Medicare ground ambulance rates), do not even cover the cost to transport a Medicaid patient. Therefore, the proposed rates, which include one proposal to cut a Basic Life Support emergency transport by nearly thirty-five percent, could be catastrophic to many Texas EMS agencies.

Many EMS agencies in Texas already operate on slim margins. When they are unable to recover operating costs through payments made by government and commercial health insurance plans, EMS agencies must turn to local taxpayers to pick up the balance. Otherwise, EMS agencies are forced to make budgetary cuts, such as reducing the number of ambulances and staff members. These operational reductions not only lead to slower response times, but also limit access to care in already underserved areas.

The 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature did not propose to cut Medicaid payments to ground ambulance. In fact, we believe that the Legislature demonstrated concern for the future of ground EMS when it passed House Bill 1407, which recognizes the need to help both urban and rural EMS agencies through local project grants and focuses on adding more paramedics in rural areas.

Given the importance of this critical service, we, the undersigned members of the Texas House, urge HHSC to reconsider the proposed cuts to ground ambulance and carefully consider how overall access to 911 services will be impacted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Trent Ashby".

Trent Ashby  
House District 57

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Peña Raymond".

Richard Peña Raymond  
House District 42



Handwritten signature of Armando "Mando" Martinez in black ink.

Armando "Mando" Martinez  
House District 39

Handwritten signature of Drew Darby in blue ink.

Drew Darby  
House District 72

Handwritten signature of Cindy Burkett in blue ink.

Cindy Burkett  
House District 113

Handwritten signature of Dan Huberty in black ink.

Dan Huberty  
House District 127

Handwritten signature of Dan Flynn in black ink.

Dan Flynn  
House District 2

Handwritten signature of Brooks Landgraf in black ink.

Brooks Landgraf  
House District 81

Handwritten signature of Lance Gooden in black ink.

Lance Gooden  
House District 4

Handwritten signature of Phil King in black ink.

Phil King  
House District 61

Handwritten signature of Joe Moody in black ink.

Joe Moody  
House District 78

Handwritten signature of Kyle Kacal in black ink.

Kyle Kacal  
House District 12

Handwritten signature of John Kuempel in black ink.

John Kuempel  
House District 44

Handwritten signature of Travis Clardy in black ink.

Travis Clardy  
House District 11

Handwritten signature of Roland Gutierrez in black ink.

Roland Gutierrez  
House District 119

Handwritten signature of John Raney in black ink.

John Raney  
House District 14

Handwritten signature of Gene Wu in black ink.

Gene Wu  
House District 137

Handwritten signature of Stan Lambert in black ink.

Stan Lambert  
House District 71



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Paddie".

Chris Paddie  
House District 9

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DeWayne Burns".

DeWayne Burns  
House District 58

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.D. 'Bobby' Guerra".

R.D. "Bobby" Guerra  
House District 41

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Hernandez".

Ana Hernandez  
House District 143

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Goldman".

Craig Goldman  
House District 97

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Byron Cook".

Byron Cook  
House District 8

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary VanDeaver".

Gary VanDeaver  
House District 1

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Dean".

Jay Dean  
House District 7

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernest J. Bailes, IV".

Ernest Bailes  
House District 18

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Zerwas".

John Zerwas  
House District 28

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Murr".

Andrew Murr  
House District 53

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oscar Longoria".

Oscar Longoria  
House District 35

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy King".

Tracy King  
House District 80

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.D. Sheffield".

J.D. Sheffield  
House District 59

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leighton Schubert".

Leighton Schubert  
House District 13

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Shine".

Hugh Shine  
House District 55



Handwritten signature of Tom Craddick in cursive.

Tom Craddick  
House District 82

Handwritten signature of James White in cursive.

James White  
House District 19

Handwritten signature of Cecil Bell, Jr. in cursive.

Cecil Bell, Jr.  
House District 3

Handwritten signature of Dade Phelan in cursive.

Dade Phelan  
House District 21

Handwritten signature of Donna Howard in cursive.

Donna Howard  
House District 48

Handwritten signature of Nicole Collier in cursive.

Nicole Collier  
House District 95

Handwritten signature of Larry Gonzales in cursive.

Larry Gonzales  
House District 52

Handwritten signature of Evelina "Lina" Ortega in cursive.

Evelina "Lina" Ortega  
House District 77

Handwritten signature of Mary E. González in cursive.

Mary E. González  
House District 75

Handwritten signature of Sergio Muñoz, Jr. in cursive.

Sergio Muñoz, Jr.  
House District 36

Handwritten signature of Ramon Romero, Jr. in cursive.

Ramon Romero, Jr.  
House District 90

Handwritten signature of Kevin Roberts in cursive.

Kevin Roberts  
House District 126

Handwritten signature of Poncho Nevárez in cursive.

Poncho Nevárez  
House District 74

Handwritten signature of Paul Workman in cursive.

Paul Workman  
House District 47

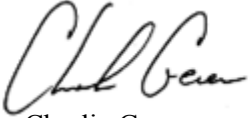
Handwritten signature of Philip Cortez in cursive.


Philip Cortez  
House District 117

Handwritten signature of Four Price in cursive.

Four Price  
House District 87



  
Charlie Geren  
House District 99

  
Tan Parker  
House District 63