

MARY ANN PEREZ
STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 144



State of Texas
House of Representatives

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April 30, 2020

Commissioner Philip Wilson
Health and Human Services Commission
4900 N Lamar
Austin, TX 78751

Dear Commissioner Wilson,

Multiple segments of our state's health care system are addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and our EMS agencies are playing a unique role as a front-line provider. By working in an uncontrolled environment, EMS professionals often do not know if a patient has the virus. Even in traditional EMS responses, such as cardiac, stroke, or motor vehicle accidents, an EMS professional may be unknowingly exposed to the virus. Despite these intense risks related to the virus, Texas EMS professionals continue to serve our Texas communities every day.

COVID-19's strain is not limited to EMS professionals; our EMS agencies are also facing increased challenges. EMS agencies have had to develop plans for quarantining EMS professionals who test positive. From a financial standpoint, Texas EMS agencies are facing dramatic cost increases for medications and other supplies, such as PPE for personnel. In addition, our agencies are facing dramatic revenue decreases due to fewer hospital transports as a result to shelter in place and fewer surgeries and other services at hospitals, which may result in non-emergency transports between facilities. In addition, an upcoming decrease in the number of insureds in Texas due to the economic situation will result in decreased revenue for EMS agencies.

The federal government has allocated an additional 6.2 percent in matching funds for the Texas Medicaid program to assist with the COVID-19 crisis. Utilizing a portion of that funding to provide a temporary increase in Medicaid reimbursement for EMS transports would provide necessary relief for our local EMS agencies. Now, perhaps more than ever, we are relying on our EMS agencies and need them to be strong.

I urge you to work with Texas EMS agencies to make the best use of the federal funds intended to support their critical work. Please do not hesitate to contact me at MaryAnn.Perez@house.texas.gov, or by contacting my Capitol office at (512) 463-0460.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Ann Perez".

State Representative Mary Ann Perez

