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Texas Medicaid Proposes Major EMS Cuts **Over 70 State Lawmakers Have Expressed Concerns Proposed Cuts of 36 Percent**

Austin, Texas – The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) proposed major cuts to ground ambulance service within the Texas Medicaid program, as part of the biennial review of Medicaid rates for ground and air ambulance service (proposed to go into effect on October 1, 2017).

The proposed cuts, which would affect both urban and rural EMS agencies, would cut some ground ambulance services by 36 percent. Advanced Life Support (ALS) would be cut from \$306 to \$247. Basic Life Support (BLS) would be cut from \$258 to \$157. Specialty care ambulance service would be cut from \$524 to \$347.

EMS agencies are particularly sensitive to Medicaid cuts due to the fact that it is one of the lowest paying programs (Texas Medicaid pays approximately 67 percent of Medicare) and it serves as a large payment base for EMS agencies (Medicaid makes up 20 percent of the payment mix in many urban areas and 30 percent in many rural areas).

In response, 22 Texas state senators and 50 Texas state representatives expressed their concern regarding the proposed cuts in letters to the HHSC commissioner. In addition, the Texas Association of Counties, Texas Hospital Association, Texas Organization of Community and Rural Hospitals, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters and Texas EMS Alliance expressed their opposition to the proposed cuts in a stakeholder letter.

Over 20 EMS agencies testified in opposition to the proposed cuts at HHSC’s stakeholder meeting on August 8, 2017. The EMS agencies indicated that they cuts would force many communities to either raise taxes to continue offering the same level of service or cut existing services to address the proposed revenue decrease.

“I will transport 911 patients, in spite of these cuts,” Jonathan Sell, the Booker County EMS director and Texas EMS Alliance president, said at the hearing. “I will not continue to transport interfacility transports to get these patients to where they really need to go. This will be the detrimental cost of Medicaid cuts to Medicaid clients because they will not be able to get to where they need to go because ambulance services such as mine can’t take any more of these losses.”

About the Texas EMS Alliance

The Texas EMS Alliance was founded by EMS leaders from across the state of Texas to create a united voice that represents all types of EMS agencies in Texas. Visit www.txemsa.com to learn more.

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