



## ALASKA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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April 7, 2017

Representative Zach Fansler

State Capital Room 416

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Representative Fansler:

I am writing today in support of HB 176 the Ground Emergency Medical Transport bill. HB 176 would allow fire departments and EMS providers to receive a higher rate of reimbursement for transporting patients covered by Medicaid. Currently fire departments and EMS providers are often reimbursed at a fraction of the actual cost for medical transports. HB 176 allows agencies in the state to begin to rectify this problem. At a time when cities across Alaska struggle to provide basic services, HB 176 will provide a level of financial relief by helping agencies receive reimbursement that is closer to actual cost.

Fire departments and EMS providers determine the cost of a medical transport and then bill accordingly. When a department transports a Medicaid patient they may only be reimbursed at a fraction of the actual cost. The difference between the cost of a transport and the amount reimbursed forces local taxpayers to make up the shortfall. HB 176 will allow providers of EMS to recoup expenses that are closer to the actual cost of the transport after departments demonstrate the accurate cost. This additional revenue can be used to bolster public safety in communities that receive it.

Many states have passed bills similar to HB 176 and are seeing an increase in revenue for transports related to Medicaid patients. At a time when our economy is struggling, we should look for ways to continue to fund vital services. HB 176 will help all communities across Alaska providing EMS.

In closing I would like to encourage the Legislature to pass HB 176. EMS is a vital service relied upon by the citizens of Alaska. The importance of this bill is magnified by the current economic situation in our state. HB 176 will help providers of emergency medical transport weather this economic storm and continue to serve the citizens of Alaska.

  
Thomas A Wescott

President Alaska Professional Fire Fighters