

Representative Adam Wool

Alaska State Legislature • District 5 Fairbanks



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HB 176 GEMT SUMMARY

Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT)

GEMT has been enacted in numerous states most recently being Washington and Missouri. GEMT is a supplemental reimbursement program that falls under Title XIX of the social Security Act. These programs access and drawdown federal Medicaid dollars to the local level where the services are being delivered. Operating since 1965 every state including Alaska participates in these programs in one way or another. As all tax payers contribute to the federal income tax this program allows Alaskans to utilize those taxes allocated to Federal Medicaid and bring them back to their state.

An Opportunity to Help Alaska's Public EMS System

Alaska's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system ensures quality medical care and ambulance transport for every individual. This care is administered by public sector EMS providers (such as fire departments/districts/hospitals) and/or private sector ambulance companies.

Today, more than 120,000 Alaskans receive care through Alaska's Medicaid program.



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**Uncompensated
Cost**

Cost of Transport

Medicaid Reimbursement

Uncompensated Costs of Transporting Medicaid Patients

Like all Alaskans, Medicaid patients rely on Alaska's EMS system when they need emergency medical care and transport to a medical facility. The reimbursement rate for the care and transport of Medicaid patients is far below the cost of providing these services, placing an increasingly greater financial burden on the Public EMS system, and ultimately taxpayers.

GEMT Funds

GEMT draws funds from the federally-backed Medicaid entitlement program, allowing public EMS providers the ability to collect 50% of their uncompensated costs for providing care to Medicaid patients. These additional funds would assist Alaska's public EMS system by 'filling the gap' in the cost of these services now being shouldered by local fire departments and districts.

GEMT legislation (HB 176) is the first step to engaging stakeholders

GEMT legislation (like that passed in California, Washington, Oregon and Missouri) is the first step for Alaska's public EMS providers to be eligible for federal reimbursement. HB 176 allows Alaska's EMS system to work with the State on the creation of a State Plan Amendment (SPA).

Important Facts about HB 176 and Alaska GEMT

- Alaska currently participates in similar programs through HSS
- GEMT has no fiscal impact to Alaska tax payers
- GEMT legislation mandates that there is no cost to the state for the program
- GEMT cannot expose the state's General Fund to any fiscal impact
- GEMT is a voluntary program thus cannot create any unfunded liability
- GEMT will help stabilize Emergency Medical Services to all Alaskans and our visitors
- GEMT will help build additional capacity at the local level
- GEMT will allow expansion of services statewide
- GEMT will not negatively impact non-participants or private sector providers
- Revenue has been estimated at \$7 million on the lower end of the spectrum to as high as \$25 million on the upper end.