

January 29, 2016

Representative Mitch Greenlick
Chair, House Committee on Health Care
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Greenlick & Members of the House Health Care Committee:

The Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO) represents approximately 950 single service districts across the state. Our members provide a diverse set of services to the citizens of Oregon including: municipal water, park and recreation services, sanitary and storm water, irrigation, and library. Our membership also includes districts providing fire and rescue services that are critical to the health, safety and welfare of our communities. As a result, SDAO would like to express its strong support for the passage of HB 4030 which is before your committee.

Oregon's current reimbursement levels for Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) emergency medical transports is far below the cost of actually providing these services. At the same time, there has been a distinct rise in the demand for these transports as Oregon's health care system transforms and welcomes more individuals into coverage.

The disparity in reimbursement for the transports and cost of service is causing a severe fiscal strain for our public EMS system and, in turn, is creating an increased hardship in its ability to meet that growing demand.

Through enabling language in Medicaid Federal statute and regulation there is a yet untapped opportunity for Oregon's public EMS providers to take advantage of increased reimbursement for the transport of these Medicaid beneficiaries.

Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) legislation has enabled eligible public EMS providers in other states, including California and Washington, to establish programs to access the additional Federal Medicaid funds.

Legislative action is needed to allow Oregon's eligible public EMS providers to also take full advantage of this Medicaid match option to offset the cost of providing services not fully covered under the current Oregon Health Plan rate schedule.

Through GEMT, public providers will be eligible for up to nearly 65%

reimbursement by Medicaid of the uncompensated cost and, in some cases, the actual cost of care and transport provided to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Strengthening the public EMS system through GEMT programs has no negative impact to the Oregon Health Plan or State General Fund.

GEMT includes a provision to create a State administration fee of up to 20% of the amount submitted for reimbursement – additional revenue to the State General Fund – after approval by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

SDAO supports HB 4030, which if passed, will strengthen Oregon's public EMS system and its ability to provide the necessary emergency medical services to all Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge you and members of the committee to pass this important measure.

Best regards.

Mark Landauer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Landauer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Special Districts Association of Oregon
Government Affairs