



640 Cleveland Street
Elyria, Ohio 44035

Phone (440) 373-6111
Fax (440) 363-2766

Chairman Burke, Vice Chairwoman Manning, Ranking member Cafaro and members of the Senate Medicaid committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Senate Bill 248 and the state of the ambulance and medical transportation industry in our state. My name is Peter de la Porte and I am the President of LifeCare Ambulance and the President of the Ohio Ambulance and Medical Transport Association.

We are a family owned business founded in 1986. We are located in Lorain County and we operate emergency services for Lorain, Elyria, Amherst, South Amherst, Amherst Township, and Carlyle Township. In addition, we contract out with our local hospital systems.

Our industry is strained due in part to a lack of quality providers. This is mainly because legitimate organizations, like my company LifeCare and those in our association, cannot keep up with the continued added cost needed to sustain the fleet necessary to accommodate the volume in our area as we face the reality of doing most Medicaid runs at a loss. This squeeze hurts Ohio businesses, the individuals we employ, and ultimately the consumers—the extremely vulnerable populations that rely on our services for both emergency and non emergency transportation.

Some time ago, LifeCare was called to come pick up a patient that had been left stranded on the side of the road because the driver doing the transport had falsified their driving license and the company failed to conduct background check. The driver was arrested and we completed the transport, but imagine the situation from the point of view of the patient in need of care and left on street. Sadly this is not a unique story. As many of my colleagues that provide quality medical transportation services are forced to close up shop due to the state's well below average Medicaid reimbursement rates, fly by night companies begin to crop up and leave vulnerable populations in precarious situations like the one I've just described.

On behalf of the 50 plus public and private entities throughout the state that are members of the Ohio Ambulance and Medical Transportation Association, I have grave concerns regarding the direction of our industry and the diminishing availability of quality medical transportation options as providers strain to provide services under unreasonable reimbursement rates.

I would be happy to answer any questions you might have and I thank you for your time and consideration.