



## National Association of EMS Physicians®

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February 7, 2022

### Ohio Chapter

Thomas Collins MD  
President

Paul Zeeb MD  
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Jeremiah Escajeda MD  
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The Honorable Stephen Huffman  
1 Capitol Square, Senate Building, Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

#### Written Testimony for Ohio Senate Health Committee hearing on H.B. No. 138 February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Dear Senator Huffman and Health Committee members,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding H.B. No. 138, scheduled for discussion at the February 9<sup>th</sup> Health Committee meeting.

My name is Thomas Collins MD, and I am an Emergency Physician in Cleveland, Ohio. Like all of you, I am committed to public service and caring for members of our community. I have spent my entire medical career caring for patients in the Emergency Department of a large public hospital, and the last 22 years serving as the EMS Medical Director for a large urban EMS system that cares for over 100,000 patients each year.

In providing testimony today, I represent over 70 members of the Ohio Chapter of the National Association of EMS Physicians. These physicians, advanced providers, EMS personnel, researchers, and educators have all made the safe delivery of EMS a core component of their professional careers. We appreciate the care you help provide through your actions on the Health Committee and believe you share our same commitment to our communities. I would like to share with you our position on the 3 amendments to H.B. No. 138 that were recently introduced in your committee.

#### Opposed to H.B. No. 138 Amendment 134 2082-3

Crucial to the safe and effective delivery of prehospital emergency care is proper education of the EMS personnel, development of patient care protocols current with the rapidly evolving medical standards of care, and provision of quality review of the care provided. This is best served by physician medical directors who are trained and practicing in emergency medicine, many of which have additional training in EMS. This is important enough that EMS represents a significant amount of the core curriculum of an Emergency Medicine residency program (3-4 years in length) and that the primary body that certifies all physician specialties approved a specific physician specialty in Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

While we understand and share the concern that some EMS agencies may have challenges in partnering with an appropriate physician, the Ohio State Board of Emergency Medical, Fire, and Transportation Services already has working mechanisms in place to provide a pathway for physicians with other specialties to serve as EMS Medical Directors. *We are opposed this proposed amendment.*



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### **Opposed to H.B. No. 138 Amendment 134 2081-2**

We recognize the challenges the EMS community faces with staffing, recruitment, and retention. Reducing ambulance staffing to one EMS provider can increase the chance of harm to the patient. Harm from delayed recognition of a critical condition. Harm from delayed lifesaving procedures. Harm from extended on-scene time while the one EMS provider attempts to accomplish all the task necessary in good patient care. Part of good medical care is the safe and intentional way of moving ill or injured patients, which cannot be accomplished with only one EMS provider.

While it may seem simple to limit lower staffing requirements to “non-emergency” calls, this opens the door to a wide spectrum of definitions of “non-emergency” and increasing the opportunity of error and harm. Additionally, this burden of being the only EMS provider will place additional stress on personnel, impacting job satisfaction, recruitment, and retention.

EMS care is more than just the ride to the hospital. *We are opposed to this proposed amendment.*

### **Supportive of H.B. No. 138 Amendment 134 2570**

The COVID19 pandemic has demonstrated, once again, how fortunate we are to have such dedicated and skilled EMS providers in Ohio. At every turn, when asked to help support our communities, they said yes. Even when it placed them at more risk to themselves. *We support the proposed amendment to allow EMS providers to administer COVID19 tests.*

In closing, Ohio has led the nation in emergency care with one of the first EMS systems in the country in 1865, the first Emergency Medicine residency program to train physicians in 1970, and one of the oldest EMS fellowship training programs in the United States. As a state, we should be proud of how we have led the nation. We should not take a step backwards.

I would like to again thank you and share how much we appreciate the many ways the Ohio House and Senate help care for the citizens of Ohio through their public service. We are dependent on each other for success in our missions and the wellbeing of Ohioans.

Sincerely,

*Thomas E. Collins MD*

Thomas E. Collins MD, FACEP, FAEMS,  
President- Ohio Chapter, National Association of EMS Physicians