

**Kent Appelhans**

**House Bill 388 Opponent Testimony**

**Ohio Senate Insurance Committee**

Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Hottinger, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Ohio Senate Insurance committee, thank you for letting me discuss my concerns about the inclusion of emergency ambulance services in House Bill 388. I ask that you amend House Bill 388 to remove emergency ambulance services from the bill.

My name is Kent Appelhans. I am a paramedic and the manager at Hanco EMS, a member of the Ohio Ambulance Association and the vice president of the State Emergency Medical Fire and Transportation Board with the Department of Public Safety. My company, Hanco is the 911 EMS provider for the City of Findlay and a majority of Hancock county. We have approximately 70 employees and have 10 licensed ambulances.

While I understand the reasons and need for such laws as this, EMS services were not fully given an opportunity in the early stages of this legislation to explain the impact it could have to the industry as EMS was added late in the process. Since ambulance services were amended into the bill in May, these services throughout the state have been focused on the pandemic and most are entirely unaware of this bill and how it would impact them.

My primary concern is the focus on the Medicare allowable for the EMS claims, making it essentially a basis for a payment amount. While many medical providers get their costs covered with the Medicare allowable, EMS is much different, and it does not in most cases cover their costs. EMS costs are still not fully understood by Medicare hence why CMS has just recently implemented a cost reporting process for EMS which will better allow them to understand and move forward with an increase to the current Medicare allowable that the allowable is much too low.

A study that I have done on the impact of this bill if passed to just our EMS in Hancock county alone showed that it would be a negative impact of over \$300,000 per year. I am concerned that it may be much more than that if Insurance Companies use this law to force our service to renegotiate our existing contracts, trying to force us to accept the Medicare Allowable which just does not cover our cost. One must understand that one of the most expensive items in EMS is the cost of readiness. Everyone outside of the industry always forgets this. This is the cost of having a truck always available when someone dials 911. The only option services will have if this is passed and includes EMS is to go to the tax payers for tax increases to replace the losses, or to decrease their "cost of readiness" by having less trucks available and eliminating personnel. Which will truly cost lives.

Please realize that EMS services are struggling already. This year I have regularly questioned myself why I got into a field such as this. I have over 30 years in this industry and I have never encountered anything like what this year has brought. EMS personnel are already seriously underpaid for what they do, with the average EMT in many areas making less than \$14 dollars an hour. This is a result of the reimbursement issues that already exist. Now add what they have had to deal with from the pandemic. It's no wonder many private services are going out of business and the ones that are still in business are struggling to staff ambulances. Because of this I regularly hear of patients waiting for hours to get a needed transport from one hospital to another for higher level of care, or from a hospital back to a nursing facility. This law will compound all these issues if EMS is left in this bill.

With this additional information I ask that you remove Emergency Ambulance services from this current bill. Please don't rush to a decision that will have devastating effect on EMS and patients throughout the State. Thank you for your consideration.