



AAA Government Affairs E-Update

August 31, 2011

- 1. Medicare Ambulance Relief Letter to Debt Reduction Committee**
- 2. AAA Submits Comments on Easing PCS Burden**
- 3. AAA Submits Comment Letter on Proposed Vehicle Standards**
- 4. AAA Position on Primary EMS Agency**
- 5. FIRE Act Grant Application Period Extended**
- 6. Cosponsors of Medicare Ambulance Relief Legislation**
- 7. Cosponsors of Federal Death Benefit Nonprofit EMS Bills**

1. Medicare Ambulance Relief Letter to Debt Reduction Committee

The recent Budget Control Act enacted into law created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction or "Super Committee". The Committee is comprised of 12 members of Congress who are tasked with developing a plan to reduce the Federal deficit by \$1.5 trillion over ten years. The Committee has until Thanksgiving and the Congress until Christmas to enact a plan or spending, with a few exceptions, will be cut by 2%.

The AAA has sent letters to all 12 members of the Committee urging them to address Medicare ambulance relief if they address a fix to the physician fee schedule. Ambulance service suppliers and providers are in need of additional Medicare reimbursement, not less. To access a copy of one of the letters to Super Committee members, please [click here](#).

2. AAA Submits Comments on Easing PCS Burden

The AAA has submitted comments to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on how best to ease the burden of the physician certification statement (PCS) for ambulance service suppliers and providers. While the proposed rule did not specifically highlight the PCS as an area for comment, the AAA continues to pursue every avenue to ease the burden of the form. To access a copy of the comment letter, please [click here](#).

3. AAA Submits Comment Letter on Proposed Vehicle Standards

The AAA has submitted comments to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) on new ambulance vehicle standards being developed. The AAA has several representatives on the technical committee developing the standard and we have been working to revise those aspects

of the proposed standards that do not improve the safety, function or efficiency of the ambulance.

The AAA and over 150 AAA members had submitted comments on an earlier version of the proposed standard. The AAA is now advocating to revise a provision that prohibits the use of hub caps on ambulances.

4. AAA Position on Primary EMS Agency

The AAA has been receiving inquiries as to the position of the Association on which Federal department should be the primary home for an agency for EMS. The position of the AAA is that emergency medical service agencies are first and foremost health care providers and thus the agency should be located within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This position is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Science, Institute of Medicine report entitled *Emergency Medical Services: At the Crossroads*.

The AAA believes that the Office of EMS at the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration should remain at the Department of Transportation and that disaster preparedness and response functions for EMS should remain at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. An EMS agency at the Department of Health and Human Services would be the primary EMS office responsible for all other oversight of EMS.

To access a copy of the AAA letter on the matter, please [click here](#).

5. FIRE Act Grant Application Period Extended

Forwarded from FEMA

Due to many first responders in the North East still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Irene, FEMA has extended the deadline for AFG applications until September 16, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

Please Note: "Nonaffiliated EMS organizations" are eligible for FIRE Act or Assistance to Firefighter Grants and are defined as nonprofit EMS agencies that are not affiliated with a hospital.

The 2011 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Application Period is Now Open

The open application period will run from August 15 to September 16, 2011. FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) provides funding for the essentials that firefighters and first responders need to be safe and effective on the job. If your department or agency has critical needs, AFG can help.

WHO'S ELIGIBLE FOR AFG?

Paid, volunteer and combination fire departments and nonaffiliated EMS organizations from urban, suburban, and rural communities in the U.S. and its territories.

WHAT DOES AFG SUPPORT?

- Firefighting and EMS equipment
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Fire and EMS vehicles
- Training programs
- Wellness and fitness programs
- Modifications to facilities

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

- Funding priorities have been categorized as: High, medium and low. Use our priority system to increase your chances of winning an award.
- We've added new items/activities eligible for funding in 2011: Behavioral health programs, boats under 20 Ft., and extended warranties.
- Flashover simulators are not eligible for funding.
- Applicants may apply for more than one vehicle. However, driver/operator training/certification is required in order to receive a vehicle award.

WHERE DO I APPLY?

Learn more about AFG and start your application online at <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>.

NEED HELP? TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AFG RESOURCES

We offer a variety of assistance to ensure that deserving applicants are successful:

- View an AFG Application Tutorial - Coming Soon!
- Review the AFG Program Guidance and Application Kit:
<http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/afggrants/documents.shtm>
- Download the Get Ready Guide: <http://www.fema.gov/firegrants>
- Call or email the Help Desk: 1-866-274-0960 or firegrants@dhs.gov
- Contact your Regional Representative:
<http://www.fema.gov/firegrants/program/contact.shtm>
- Review applicable NFPA standards: <http://www.nfpa.org/nfpaafg2011>

NEW THIS YEAR: GRANT RECIPIENTS MUST REGISTER IN THE CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION (CCR) SYSTEM

As of August 2010, prime recipients of Federal grants are required to register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) system. As a potential grantee you are not required to register, but you may wish to do so now in case you receive an award. CCR registration will be required if you are selected for an award.

How to register:

Obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

If you already have a DUNS number, skip to #2.

Once you have a DUNS number, register here: <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/default.aspx>.

For more information on grantee registration in the CCR system, download the AFG Get Ready Guide or visit their website: <https://www.bpn.gov/ccr/grantees.aspx>

6. Cosponsors of Medicare Ambulance Relief Legislation

The *Medicare Ambulance Access Preservation Act of 2011* (MAAPA) was introduced in the Senate on March 1 by Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) and in the House on March 10 by Congressmen Charles Boustany (R-LA) and Richard

Neal (D-MA). MAAPA (S. 424, H.R. 1005) would provide a 6% increase under the Medicare ambulance fee schedule for ambulance transports originating in urban or rural areas and extend the bonus base payment of 22.6% for ambulance transports originating in super rural areas. The increases would be for five years starting January 1, 2012.

Last year, the AAA was successful in efforts to extend the temporary 2% urban, 3% rural and super rural bonus increases until the end of 2011. The relief from MAAPA would take the place of the current temporary Medicare ambulance relief and would not be in addition to it. Medicare ambulance relief is the top legislative priority of the AAA.

Current Cosponsors of MAAPA

Below is a list, current as of today, of members of Congress who have officially been added as cosponsors to MAAPA (S. 424, H.R. 1005). The names of the lead sponsors of the bills are underlined.

IL: Rep. Aaron Schock

KS: Sen. Pat Roberts

LA: Rep. Charles Boustany

ME: Sen. Susan Collins, Rep. Michael Michaud

MA: Sen. John Kerry, Rep. Richard Neal, Rep. John Tierney

NJ: Sen. Frank Lautenberg

NY: Sen. Charles Schumer, Rep. Paul Tonko, Rep. Maurice Hinchey

ND: Sen. Kent Conrad

PA: Rep. Tim Murphy

TX: Rep. Charlie Gonzalez

VT: Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Rep. Peter Welch

WV: Rep. Nick Rahall

7. Cosponsors of Federal Death Benefit Nonprofit EMS Bills

The second highest legislative priority of the AAA is to ensure that paramedics and EMTs who are employed by nongovernmental EMS agencies are covered by the Public Safety Officer Benefit (PSOB) program. The PSOB program provides death benefits to the family members of public safety officers who die in the line of duty.

To extend coverage to paramedics and EMTs employed by private non-profit EMS agencies, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced the *Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act* (S. 385) and Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA) introduced the *Danny McIntosh Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act* (H.R. 1668). H.R. 1668 has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee and S. 385 was included in the Senate version of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Authorization Bill. The House also passed a version of the FAA bill which did not include the Dale Long Act language so House and Senate conferees are currently negotiating to merge the two bills. The AAA strongly supports expanding the program to those paramedics and EMTs employed by all nongovernmental EMS agencies.

Below is a list, current as of today, of members of Congress who have officially been added as cosponsors to the *Dale Long Act* (S. 385) or the *Danny McIntosh Act* (H.R. 1668). The names of sponsors and champions of the bills are underlined.

Dale Long Act (S. 1353) Cosponsors

ID: Sen. Mike Crapo

MA: Sen. John Kerry

MN: Sen. Al Franken

NY: Sen. Chuck Schumer

ND: Sen. Kent Conrad

VT: Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders

Danny McIntosh Act (H.R. 1668) Cosponsors

CT: Rep. Joe Courtney

PA: Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick