



Please Support EMS Workforce Development

REQUEST

Please cosponsor H.R. 2220, the Preserve Access to Rapid Ambulance Medical Treatment (PARA-EMT) Act, introduced by Reps. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D-WA) and Brad Finstad (R-MN), which would help address the Paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) shortage.

BACKGROUND

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is facing crippling staffing challenges that threaten the availability of critical emergency healthcare services. The shortage of EMTs and Paramedics is resulting in longer 9-1-1 response times and delays in interfacility transfers, putting patients who need urgent health care at unacceptable risk. This shortage was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is a long-term problem that has been building for over a decade.

Career EMS workers routinely leave EMS for careers with higher pay. In addition, the pipeline of EMS workers has been stretched thin as highly trained Paramedics are being hired by hospitals to offset the nursing shortage. And volunteer EMS workers are coping with rising call volumes at a time when fewer people are volunteering to serve their communities. The 2024 Ambulance Employee Workforce Turnover Study by the American Ambulance Association (AAA) and Newton 360 – the most sweeping survey of its kind involving nearly 20,000 employees working at 258 EMS organizations – found that overall annual turnover among Paramedics and EMTs ranges from 20-30 percent.

To help combat this trend, the PARA-EMT Act (H.R. 2022) would:

- Provide \$50 million to the Office of the Assistance Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) for grants open to all ambulance service providers to fund Paramedic and EMT recruitment and training, including employee education and peer-support programming to reduce and prevent suicide, burnout, mental health conditions, and substance use disorders.
- Reduce barriers that prevent U.S. military veterans from becoming certified as civilian Paramedics and EMTs.
- Request that the Secretary of Labor (in coordination with the HHS Secretary) conduct a study on the current and projected EMS workforce shortage and report their findings.

To learn more or to cosponsor H.R. 2220, the PARA-EMT Act, please contact Kat Gillespie in Rep. Gluesenkamp Perez's office at Katherine.Gillespie@mail.house.gov or Meagan Daly in Rep. Finstad's office at Meagan.Daly@mail.house.gov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Key Reasons for the EMS Workforce Shortage

Some of the most common reasons for the EMS workforce shortage include:

- A need for more EMS responders to meet increasing demand for ambulance service due to aging communities, substance use disorder, behavioral health challenges, and chronic care needs.
- Low wages for career EMTs and Paramedics, despite the tremendous responsibilities that come with the job.
- A very limited capacity to raise wages, due to the declining financial health and negative fiscal outlook facing most EMS ambulance services. Many insurers – including Medicare and Medicaid – pay EMS agencies less than their actual cost of providing care and transportation.
- A decline in the number of new volunteers to replace long-time volunteers aging into retirement.
- Significant delays in turning patients over to hospitals due to emergency department crowding.