



Ask your representatives to become members of the Congressional EMS Caucus!

To contact your Members of Congress call and/or email the health legislative assistant.

Phone Call Instructions

- 1) Figure out your Member of Congress by entering your zip code in the upper left hand corner of the following website: www.house.gov
- 2) Figure out your two Senators by visiting the following website: www.senate.gov
- 3) Call your Member of Congress and Senators' Washington, DC office, and ask to speak to their health legislative assistant.
- 4) If you don't have the chance to speak with the health legislative assistant, leave them a message.
- 5) If you intend on sending an email, ask for the health legislative assistant's email address.
- 6) Talk about or add state or local information to your email you think is helpful. Members' offices love state and local information.

Draft Call Script

EMS ADVOCATE:

Hi, my name is _____. I'm a constituent from ____ (home town, state). Could I please speak to the Legislative Assistant who handles health care?

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE:

Let me see if XXXX is available. May I ask what you are calling about?

EMS ADVOCATE:

Yes, I am calling about emergency medical services issues.

HEALTH LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT:

Hi, this is XXXX, how can I help you?

EMS ADVOCATE:

Hi, this is ___(your name)___ from ___(home town) _____. I'm calling because I would like to ask Congressman or woman XX to join the Congressional Emergency Medical Services Caucus.

EMS ADVOCATE:

Explain how and why this is important in 2 minutes or less. The formation of a Congressional EMS Caucus is very timely given the release of the Institute of Medicine's "Future of Emergency Care" series of reports and a GAO study on the reimbursement issues that ambulance providers face, among other things.

The ongoing policy and regulatory issues that affect the day-to-day operations of EMS providers throughout the country including disaster preparedness, Medicare and Medicaid issues, EMS research, workforce issues and the National Emergency Medical Services Information System, are all critical components of a national EMS agenda.

HEALTH LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT:

Response could vary – Some members of Congress do not join Caucuses as a general rule because there are a lot of them. Others could say that they will pass the information along/consider the request.

EMS ADVOCATE:

I would be happy to email you or fax you a copy of the Dear Colleague that has been circulated in the House. What is your fax and/or email address?

Thank you for your time. I hope the Congressman/woman will consider joining the Congressional EMS Caucus. I will follow up with you in a couple of weeks. ***(If you make the request in early August, they may not have an answer for you until September due to the Congressional recess that occurs during the entire month of August).***

Draft Email:

Hi,

Hi, my name is _____. I'm a constituent from ____ (home town, state) and I am writing today to ask Congressman/woman XXXXX to join the Emergency Medical Services Caucus. ***Explain how you are involved in EMS issues in your state/community (whether you are a provider, etc.)***

I/my organization is a member of Advocates for EMS, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting, educating and increasing awareness among decision-makers in Washington on issues affecting EMS providers. I am writing today to ask Congressman/woman XXXXX join the newly formed Congressional Emergency Medical Services Caucus.

As a result of the formation of Advocates, the EMS community has been working together in a more coordinated fashion to educate Members of Congress on federal policy issues affecting the diverse delivery of care that constitute EMS. We believe Congressional hearings on disaster preparedness, support for programs administered by HRSA, NHTSA, DHS and others reflect a growing awareness and support for the EMS community.

To build on that progress on Capitol Hill, members of Advocates for EMS worked with several Members of Congress to start a Congressional Emergency Medical Services Caucus. Those members are, Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Congressman Charles Boustany (R-LA) and Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN). EMS providers throughout the country face a broad array of federal policy, reimbursement and regulatory issues that span across a number of committee jurisdictions in the House of Representatives. We believe a Congressional EMS Caucus will bring a disciplined focus to these issues as Congress weighs further action.

The formation of a Congressional EMS Caucus is very timely given the release of the Institute of Medicine's "Future of Emergency Care" series of reports and a GAO study on the reimbursement issues that ambulance providers face. The ongoing policy and regulatory issues that affect the day-to-day operations of EMS providers throughout the country including disaster preparedness, Medicare and Medicaid issues, EMS research, workforce issues and the National Emergency Medical Services Information System, are all critical components of a national EMS agenda.

I appreciate your consideration and hope Congressman/woman XXXXX will consider joining the EMS Caucus. I have included a copy of the Dear Colleague that is being circulated by the Co-Chairs of the Caucus.

Sincerely,

Your name and address

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Join the Emergency Medical Services Caucus

June 9, 2008

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to join with us to support the work of emergency medical services providers and other emergency medical services organizations as we form the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Caucus.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is the primary first responder for medical assistance in the event of a disaster or public health emergency. However, unlike police, fire and other emergency management agencies, there is no dedicated program to support EMS infrastructure or disaster response.

In a report recently released by the Department of Homeland Security, EMS providers only receive 4% of the total first responder grant funds available. This funding shortfall threatens the ability of our EMS responders to respond to a crisis.

Disasters such as the collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita highlight the need for a comprehensive emergency medical services system.

When the World Trade Center's twin towers collapsed, major communication gaps were exposed, leaving people without the ability to call for help, locate loved ones, or access basic information. Paramedics couldn't talk with police by radio; some two-way emergency medical radios failed; data between dispatcher and ambulance data terminals didn't work properly, causing further delays; and while hospital beds were available, only 26% of burn-injured patients were routed to burn centers because dispatchers didn't have access to vital information on bed availability.

Likewise, Hurricane Katrina created a humanitarian crisis and spotlighted the dire state of emergency medical communications. Behind the hurricane's eye, another fundamental communications disaster unfolded – knocking out the 9-1-1 network and cutting off hospital communications, which led to emergency medical workers being unable to communicate with each other and created a nightmare of inaccessible patient records.

An estimated 1,000 deaths a year are linked to delayed emergency medical response. For example, after a sudden cardiac arrest, the chances of reviving heart attack victim diminish by an estimated 7-10 percent per minute without defibrillation. Few people survive untreated after more than 10 to 12 minutes. Better information, technology and communications can often speed response and save lives.

In addition, there are ongoing EMS problems in rural areas. Rural communities across the country have suffered flat or decreasing population for years. As the population in rural communities decreases, so does the tax base and volunteer pool on which many

emergency services rely. When an ambulance company pulled out of Mississippi earlier this year, 23 counties were left without ambulance services.

A comprehensive, coordinated emergency medical services system that has adequate resources for staffing, training and equipment is essential to assure prompt, quality care to persons experiencing medical crisis. To help develop these systems, and to help find solutions to these challenges, please join us as we form the Emergency Medical Services Caucus. Let us work together to developing sound policy solutions and improved funding sources to support this essential provider in the health care continuum.

To join the EMS Caucus please call Walter Gonzales (Ruppersberger) 5-3061, or Leah Rosales (Walz) 5-2472, or Jeff Dobrozsi (Boustany) 5-2031.

Sincerely,

		
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger Member of Congress	Charles W. Boustany, Jr. Member of Congress	Timothy J. Walz Member of Congress