



Policy Position Paper

National EMS Organizations Oppose Establishing a U.S. Emergency Medical Services Administration within the Department of Homeland Security

Support Alternative Approaches Increasing Federal Support for EMS Systems

On May 3, 2005, George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute issued a brief entitled, "*Back to the Future: An Agenda for Federal Leadership of Emergency Medical Services*". The issue brief made numerous recommendations that they believe would improve training and funding for emergency medical services (EMS) at the federal level.

Advocates for EMS, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to increasing awareness among decision-makers in Washington on issues affecting emergency medical service (EMS) providers agrees with several of the assessments in report. Most notably, Advocates agrees that EMS has long been overshadowed in receiving federal support, including homeland security first responder funding. However, the undersigned Advocates members do not support the proposal to move EMS out of the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) and into a newly created U.S. EMS Administration (USEMSA) under the Department of Homeland Security.

Instead, Advocates supports creation of an EMS office within DHS to provide leadership and support for EMS terrorism preparedness and response, a dedicated program of EMS first responder funding, and the passage of legislation to create a Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services to improve coordination among the many Federal agencies that involve EMS, not just NHTSA.

NHTSA has a productive history as a lead federal EMS coordinating agency since the late 1960's. NHTSA has a proven track record of coordinating with other agencies including the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, United State Fire Administration and the Centers for Disease Control. NHTSA also assists the EMS community with disaster preparedness response.

Since its inception in November 2002, Advocates for EMS has supported a multi-faceted approach to improve federal support for EMS providers. A number of steps have been taken thus far and to assess and provide additional federal support for EMS systems throughout the country. Some of these accomplishments include:

- In the FY 2004 and FY 2005 Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee reports, Congressional included directives to the Department of Homeland Security requiring reports to the Appropriations Committee on state and local expenditures for EMS under the

Homeland Security and Fire Grant programs. This was the first time that federal EMS expenditures had been accounted for under Homeland Security, and until these reports were required, the actual dollar amount EMS was receiving from the Department of Homeland Security were unknown. The reports established the fact that EMS receives less than 4% of first responder funding for which they are eligible, the remainder going to other first responder services.

- In addition, NHTSA, in cooperation with the Health Resources and Services Administration, developed plans to implement the National Emergency Medical Services Information System (NEMSIS). Last year, Congress recognized the importance of this much needed data system, and added funding to the NHTSA budget to support establishment of a National EMS Resource Center to assist state and local EMS systems in data collection and analysis. This funding is an important first step towards implementation of NEMSIS, which will continue with pilots in several states.
- Institute of Medicine is in the middle of a comprehensive two-year study on our national EMS needs, *The Future of Emergency Care in the U.S. Health System*. The final report will likely address Federal agency support and responsibility to support EMS systems across the country. Advocates believes that a major restructuring of Federal agency support for EMS should wait for the benefit of the IOM review.
- Advocates believes that better coordination through a Federal Interagency Committee on Emergency Medical Services is the best approach to ensure that the needs of EMS at the federal level are addressed. The Emergency Medical Support Act, as introduced by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Russ Feingold (D-WI) in the Senate and Congressmen Joel Hefley (R-CO) and Tom Allen (D-ME) in the House of Representatives creates the FICEMS and a 13 member advisory panel made up of members of the EMS community. The measure creates a FICEMS and a 13 member advisory panel made up of members of the EMS community. A similar version of FICEMS has also been proposed and supported by the Bush Administration in the reauthorization of the Department of Transportation. The Emergency Medical Services Support Act is supported by the following national EMS organizations:

Advocates for EMS, the Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association, American Ambulance Association, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Heart Association, American Medical Response, Association of Air Medical Services, COMCARE, Emergency Nurses Association, Gold Cross/Mayo Medical Transport, Medtronic Physio-Control, National Association of Emergency Medical Services Educators, National Association of Emergency Medical Services Physicians, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Directors, National EMS Pilot Association, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Rural Health Association, the Brain Trauma Foundation and the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health.