

Bell Ambulance, Inc.
Post Office Box 070550
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207

Offices: (414) 486-2000
Facsimile: (414) 486-4100

Website: www.264Bell.com



*"IF IT DOESN'T SAY BELL ON THE SIDE,
YOU'VE JUST BEEN TAKEN FOR A RIDE!!!"*[®]

Rick A. Zehetner
President

James P. Lombardo
Executive Vice President

Wayne A. Jurecki
Vice President, Chief Operating Officer

Keith Rader, M. D.
Medical Director

To: Governor Tony Evers
All Legislature
From: Bell Ambulance, Inc
RE: Federal stimulus funds
Date: March 31, 2020

Ambulance/EMS providers across Wisconsin are bracing for a severe spike in services in the next several weeks. The projected peak of COVID19 is hitting the industry at a difficult time. Under the State's Medicaid program, ambulance services have not received a rate adjustment since 2008, when a symbolic 1% increase was effectively offset by other programmatic changes.

Flat reimbursement rates over the last 12 years have left the industry operating under extremely narrow margins and hindered their ability to compete in today's workforce market. A recent news report indicated the providers in Milwaukee have over 200 unfilled EMS positions.

The recent federal stimulus packages allow a temporary rate increase for ambulance services without the need for any additional GPR. Specifically, the packages increase the federal matching rates (FMAP) by 6.2%, meaning Wisconsin will receive more federal funding for the same level of GPR that is approved in the 2019-21 State budget.

Even with such an increase, Wisconsin's Medicaid program lags far behind the federal government and neighboring states in reimbursements for ambulance services. Wisconsin currently reimburses ambulance providers at a rate of 42% of the federal Medicare rate, an already below-cost reimbursement rate as established by the Congressional Budget Office. With an increased rate made possible by the new federal stimulus packages, Wisconsin's Medicaid reimbursement rate could be increased to just 49% of the federal Medicare rate. No one is getting rich from these programs.

In addition, COVID19 is adding over \$20 to the cost of every ambulance response. Daily employee health screenings, new decontamination protocols after COVID19 encounters and added equipment and supply costs are increasing the loss experienced on each Medicaid transport. Under current circumstances, many providers in Wisconsin will find it very difficult to continue operations through this crisis.

We are asking you to authorize the 6.2% federal Medicaid matching rate increase to be used to increase the ambulance reimbursement rate and maintain the current level of GPR approved in the 2019-21 budget.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Matt Kussow at 920-988-2320 or mattkussow@gmail.com.