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April 6, 2020

Dr. David Duncan  
EMSA Director  
10901 Gold Center Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Dear Dr. Duncan:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative financial impact on the ambulance industry in several ways. Specifically, the shelter-in-place order and fears around COVID-19 infection have caused a significant reduction in the number of transports in most of the state, which we estimate to be about 25%. This transport volume reduction has caused financial stress to most ambulance providers. In some cases, ambulance providers are exploring laying off employees to cut cost commensurate with the lost revenue. As a result, emergency and non-emergency ambulance services may not be ready for a surge of COVID-19 patients. Ultimately, this means a possible reduction in availability to meet a COVID-19 patient surge.

***Given the critical nature of the COVID-19 situation regarding ambulance resource preparedness, we write today to request that the Emergency Medical Services Authority utilize the FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program to fund the deployment of regional ambulance teams as a mechanism to assure ambulance surge capacity within communities. Additionally, we request the EMS Authority give guidance that COVID-19 patients be transported only by ambulance for interfacility transports, which assures that appropriate personal protective equipment be used for transporting these patients.***

We believe the most effective method to assure regional ambulance capacity is to work directly with Local Emergency Medical Services Agencies to rapidly conduct a capacity needs assessment for ALS, BLS and interfacility ambulance resources, and the ability for local providers to maintain that capacity given the financial impact of reduced transport volume. Where there are gaps, immediately activate ambulance strike teams from local providers to fill the need and pay for those services through the FEMA Public Assistance Grant Program.

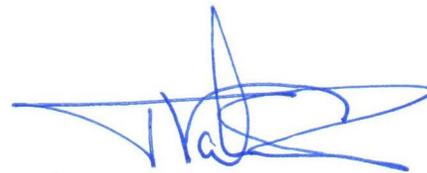
President Trump's declaration of emergency covers COVID-19 from January 27 until an undetermined future date. The national state of emergency enables states and local governments to access assistance from the Federal government via the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as Amended (Stafford Act), Title 42 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) § 5121 et seq (PDF).

Through the Stafford Act, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers EMS aid to state and local-level governments during emergencies. The Agency's Public Assistance Grant Program is currently the best funding method for bringing national support to local EMS. As part of the CARES Act recently passed by the Congress and signed by the President, the Public Assistance Grant Program is receiving a \$45 billion infusion of funds specifically for first responders on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. The catch is that private EMS providers cannot apply for funding, a governmental entity must submit the grant application then pass along the awarded aid. This public-private partnership process has been used to fund private EMS response on the local level for providers in the San Francisco Bay Area. We would like to see a version of that program expanded statewide.

If the state were to move forward in offering this partnership to the state's trusted private ambulance providers, there is potential that millions of additional dollars of Federal funding could be brought into California AT NO COST to the state. These funds would be used to sustain emergency services during these challenging times, including the potential for expanded missions of patient triage, transport to alternative destinations, and perhaps even treatment-in-place should regulations continue to evolve.

Thank you for considering our request to partner to bring Federal dollars to California communities served by private EMS providers. Also, thank you for considering guidance regarding utilizing ambulances to transport COVID-19 patients to assure appropriate safety precautions. Please contact me at 559-269-3265 should you have any questions about this request. Thank you for your time, thought, and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Todd Valeri', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Todd Valeri, President  
California Ambulance Association

cc: Kristin Weivoda, EMSAAC President  
Dan Lynch, CCEMSA Administrator