



Memorandum of Support **S1466 Breslin/A250-A Magnarelli**

Direct payments for ambulance providers

An Act to authorize payments to nonparticipating or nonpreferred providers of ambulance services licensed under article 30 of the public health law.

The United New York Ambulance Network (UNYAN) represents ambulance transportation services across New York State. Comprised of over 40 commercial and hybrid not for profit ambulance companies, UNYAN's members employ nearly 5,000 New Yorkers and provide emergency medical care and transportation services to over 14 million people in urban, suburban and rural areas throughout New York.

This bill would streamline the process by which ambulance service providers are reimbursed by health insurers by allowing for health insurers to send payments directly to ambulance providers without having to be channeled through the patient first. If a patient uses an ambulance that is a nonparticipating or nonpreferred service of their health insurance, the payment for ambulance service goes to the patient. It is then the responsibility of the patient to send that payment on to the ambulance service. Far too frequently, many of those patients never pay the ambulance service providers.

This system is often abused when patients learn that they will receive the funds for the ambulance service. In these challenging economic times, this direct payment legislation becomes even more critical. When a check comes from the insurance company with the patient's name on it, they have a choice to make: spend the money or forward it to the ambulance provider. Far too often, the 'spend the money' option wins. We see an increase in this abusive behavior during the holiday shopping season and more disturbingly, with substance abusers.

It is unfair for insurance companies to burden their customers with this process and unfair for ambulance providers to be held in the middle of this incentive and punishment game with insurers. This repeated lack of payments time after time, weakens our EMS system.

Insurers are already paying out of network providers their usual and customary rates. But making providers and patients go through the complicated process of paying patients directly instead of providers. UNYAN believes the payments for these services should be made directly to the ambulance companies.

Ambulance providers are mandated responders who must, by law, respond, evaluate, treat, and transport the patients. However, the ambulance providers must be compensated for their service. If an ambulance service that relies on the fees that it collects to finance its response capabilities is unable to collect those fees, a vicious downward spiral ensues and patients suffer needlessly.

This legislation would provide for a more efficient system in delivering the reimbursement to the people who are entitled to it, hereby strengthening the EMS system as a whole. For the above stated reasons, UNYAN wholeheartedly supports this bill and urges your support as well.

Care You Can Count On

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