



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Assemblymember Rodriguez and CAA Hold Press Conference to Call for an Increase in the State's Medi-Cal Reimbursement Rate

(Sacramento, CA) – This morning, Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez (D – Pomona) held a press conference with the California Ambulance Association (CAA) to call for an increase in the State's Medi-Cal reimbursement rate for private emergency ground transport providers. This press conference also highlighted Assembly Bill (AB) 55, authored by Assemblymember Rodriguez, which would require the reimbursement rate for private emergency ground transport providers to be increased to \$350 per transport.

“As a career first responder, I have watched firsthand as our providers receive far less than fair compensation for their life-saving service. Current reimbursement rates do not even cover ambulance transport costs. This has left our providers with their backs against the wall and is threatening the overall stability of our transport infrastructure,” **stated Assemblymember Rodriguez.**

California has led the nation in many instances. However, we trail behind the majority of the country when it comes to Medi-Cal reimbursement. California ranks 46th in the nation, with a reimbursement rate of about \$111.48 per transport. The national average reimbursement rate is over double California's and is estimated at \$257.68. In Arizona, the reimbursement rate is even higher, estimated at \$377.33. That figure is over three times California's rate.

California has not funded a Medi-Cal base rate increase for ambulance services since 1999. In 2013, California cut the reimbursement rate by 10% and never replaced it in future budgets. When adjusting this figure for inflation, the reimbursement rate is really about \$63. Due to these alarmingly low rates, privately insured patients are charged higher prices to balance the losses. Raising the reimbursement rate would thus alleviate costs for both patients and providers.

The median pay for our EMTs is about \$17 per hour. This wage is less than what auto mechanics and fast food workers receive. California's first responders make many sacrifices to care for others. They should not have to choose between a career they love and making a livable income.

“Every time we serve a Medi-Cal patient, we take a financial loss,” **said Jimmy Pierson, President of the California Ambulance Association.** “We do it because we live to serve, but that's not fair to our employees. We look to the state to reimburse us fairly so we can just break even. This will put us in a better position to offer sustainable living wages to our employees while continuing to serve the patients who need us most. We're not an industry that is used to asking for help. We're the helpers. But right now, we need the state to help us by giving us a fair Medi-Cal reimbursement rate.”

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Assemblymember Rodriguez ([Twitter](#)) represents the 53rd Assembly District which includes the cities of Chino, Montclair, Ontario, Pomona, and Upland. He is Chair of the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management.