Dear **XXXXX**

Ground ambulance service organizations continue to struggle with the financial impact of responding to the COVID-19 national health emergency, and we desperately need your help.

Everyday our paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are treating, transporting and testing potential COVID-19 patients. While our costs have increased exponentially in response to COVID-19, our revenue has decreased as we maintain full readiness to combat the pandemic and continue to provide 24-hour vital non COVID-19-related ambulance services, but with fewer transports.

Our costs for personal protection equipment (PPE), overtime pay, and other expenses directly related to COVID-19 are increasing. We need to respond to every call prepared as if the patient has COVID-19. However, in many instances the medical care is only covered if the patient is transported to an appropriate facility.

At the same time, there is a sharp decline in the normal response and transport volume as Americans are reluctant to call 9-1-1 for non-COVID-19 medical emergencies and as hospitals cancel all non-elective surgeries and related medically necessary transports. Simply put, our costs are increasing as we expend the resources necessary to address COVID-19 as our revenue across the board is decreasing.

In communities across America, patients rely on us around the clock for an immediate response to every call for help regardless of ability to pay. Our organization needs immediate financial relief to maintain current staffing and resources to address the COVID-19 outbreak and ensure we can continue to provide vital emergency and non-emergency ambulance services today and in the future.

As the Congress considers additional economic stimulus legislation to address the impact of COVID-19, please include the below provisions.

* Require CMS to reimburse ground ambulance service providers and suppliers for performing protocol-driven treatments in place during the public health emergency. This coverage will help limit the spread of COVID-19 by keeping patients with mild cases of COVID-19 at home and out of overcrowded hospitals or other facilities where they could expose others to the virus.
* Appropriate $2.89 billion under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund specifically for ground ambulance services providers and suppliers for payments of $48,000 per ambulance registered as of April 1. We greatly appreciate the recent payments under the Fund which will help with our current situation. The proportion of the funding, however, does not fully match our current needs and we require additional appropriated funds to help offset ongoing increased medical costs and uncompensated care, as well as lost revenue related due to the COVID-19 national health emergency.
* Amend the Stafford Act to enable private for-profit EMS organizations to apply directly to FEMA for Public Assistance program grants during the public health emergency. This will allow all EMS organizations to apply for financial assistance and for state and local governments to focus their limited resources on directly combating the pandemic.
* Protect paramedics and EMTs by directing FEMA to provide them with higher priority access to PPE and COVID-19 testing. Paramedics and EMTs are too often not given priority access to PPE and testing even though they are frequently the first health care professionals to come into contact with COVID-19 patients. Please also include all EMS personnel in hazard pay and other compensation for essential workers.

Thank you in advance for helping ensure that EMS agencies and personnel have the resources they need to continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the funding to maintain the short and long-term viability of our operations.

Sincerely,

XXXX XXXX