

## **SB 274 – Creating the seat belt safety fund and increasing the fine for adult seat belt violations**

Chairman Proehl and members of the House Committee on Transportation, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding Senate Bill 274. My name is Joe House and I am the Executive Director for the Emergency Medical Services Board. Our board is charged with the efficient and effective regulation of emergency medical services within the state and to ensure that quality out-of-hospital care is available to the citizens of Kansas. Quality out-of-hospital care relies on strong education and access to the devices, medications, and equipment necessary to execute a physician's care plan.

In addition to creating the seat belt safety fund, this bill, as currently written, reduces the percentage disbursed of remitted fines to eight other funds, including two that directly support emergency medical services within our state – the EMS revolving fund and the trauma fund.

### ***EMS Revolving Fund***

This fund, administrated through a grant process, provides equipment and education to local ambulance services, predominantly those in the rural areas of our state. In FY2016, we received nearly \$1.7 million in grant requests and approximate only receiving enough funding through this disbursement to award \$365,000 in funding.

On average, 75% of the funds received are directly distributed to agencies within a frontier, rural, or densely settled rural area. Monies received through this fund are also directly distributed to each of the six EMS regional councils to support educational offerings to EMS providers and their communities (Example: Hands only CPR and elderly fall prevention).

The funds directly distributed to agencies are utilized to assist in obtaining equipment necessary for primary patient care that cannot be funded completely through other means. Examples of these primary patient care devices include automatic CPR devices, cardiac monitors/defibrillators, airway suctioning units, and devices to aid intubation.

Local EMS agencies are consistently challenged by decreasing federal reimbursements, reduction in local government budgets which typically subsidize emergency services, and very low state reimbursement rates. In some instances, capital outlay budgets for these primary patient care devices must be delayed indefinitely simply to continue to operate the ambulance service.

In FY2009, the EMS revolving fund was credited \$536,961 from a 2.50% disbursement. In FY2015, the EMS revolving fund was credited \$391,310 from a 2.28% disbursement. In the seven years of the EMS revolving fund, the credited amount from the

disbursement has never increased. In FY2015, a 2.22% disbursement (as proposed by this bill) would have reduced the total amount credited by \$10,297.63.

### ***Trauma Fund***

The Kansas Trauma Program's vision is to ensure a healthier and safer Kansas through the reduction of death, disability, suffering and costs associated with human injury by developing standards for quality care, mapping healthcare resources, and educating the public and health professionals.

Each regional trauma council within the Kansas Trauma Program allows and encourages EMS representation. These councils support educational offerings and programs for not only the health professionals across a multi-disciplinary front (physicians, nurses, and EMS providers), but also for the community and public within these regions.

In FY2015, the six regional trauma councils combined expended \$8,000 of their funding to support the Seat Belts are For Everyone (SAFE) program within their local area.

The SAFE program is an excellent program that continually proves it benefits as demonstrated by the proponents of this bill. The EMS Board remains supportive of the SAFE program and agrees that this life-saving and injury severity reducing program needs to have a sustainable state funding source.

The demonstrated history of continual decrease in remitted funds combined with a program that, through its demonstrated success, will reduce the number of seat belt fines issued leads our Board to have concern that this solution will ultimately have a negative impact upon the EMS revolving fund and the Trauma fund. Our Board cannot support a bill that will negatively impact EMS.

We appreciate your consideration of these facts when you work this bill and I am available for questions at the appropriate time.

