Progressive Maryland

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July 21, 2008

Hon. Mike Knapp
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear President Knapp,

I write to urge the County Council to work with the County Executive to create an Emergency Medical Services Transport fee billable to insurance companies. Progressive Maryland believes such legislation would be a good way to raise revenue the county needs to continue to improve its emergency response system, and one with no to minimal impact on county residents.

As billing insurance companies for this expense is increasingly common in other jurisdictions, it makes little sense to continue to put this expense on taxpayers. Under the plan proposed by the County Executive, no county resident – with or without health insurance – would be billed for EMS transport.

Some have expressed concerns that such a policy might deter people from calling 911 for emergency transport. But there is no evidence we are aware of – statistical or anecdotal – to back up that claim from the hundreds of jurisdictions around the country where this policy is in effect, and no such evidence from the many neighboring jurisdictions with such a policy, including Prince George's County, the District of Columbia, Fairfax County, Frederick County, Arlington County, and the City of Alexandria.

Considering the difficult budgetary climate, it only makes sense to ask insurance companies to pay for at least some of the costs of EMS transportation.

Will you work with the County Executive to pass a plan for an EMS transport fee billable to insurance companies?

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean R. Dobson
Executive Director