

**Emergency Medical Services Transport Reimbursement Act**

Good evening. My name is Joe Sandler and I am here representing The **Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC)**. The JCRC is the public affairs and community relations arm of The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington representing over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout DC, Maryland, and Virginia. In light of recent actions by the Maryland General Assembly which may transfer major costs from the state to local governments, we are concerned how this will impact the county's ability to make resources available to meet critical needs -including assistance for the most vulnerable members of our community. As a result, we support the Executive's **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transport Reimbursement Act** which is projected to generate \$14 to \$17 million dollars for Montgomery County annually.

The EMS Transport Reimbursement Act would allow the County to be reimbursed by private health insurance companies and the federal government for ambulance service, just as hospitals seek reimbursement from insurers for treating patients. As a County resident – whether insured or uninsured -- you would not, by law, pay a dime or receive a bill. The County would accept the insurance reimbursement offered as payment in full and would waive all co-pays and deductibles. One hundred percent of the reimbursements would be dedicated by law to meeting the critical and growing needs of our Fire & Rescue Service.

In 2010 Montgomery County voters rejected a similar proposal through referendum. Since the referendum, The State of Maryland may decide to shift over \$400 million over ten years in state teacher pension costs to Montgomery County. The State has also approved an inflexible "Maintenance of Effort" law on school funding that will force us to add at least \$25 million to our reserves each year above and beyond what we already do.

Given the manner in which the County's fiscal situation has evolved since the vote, County Executive Leggett has made the responsible decision to re introduce the legislation. Montgomery County can no longer afford to let millions of dollars go uncollected each year. We believe it is fundamentally wrong for County taxpayers to foot the bill for costs that are covered by insurers in the majority of jurisdictions in Maryland, the Washington metropolitan area, and the nation. In localities which charge for ambulance services, there is no evidence that

emergency medical treatment has suffered as a result or that people are significantly less likely to call 911 for help.

Furthermore, not receiving millions of additional dollars in reimbursement would have an adverse impact on our community. It would likely result in raising taxes and further reducing services, which would mean less Fire & Rescue staffing, less equipment, and longer response times. I urge you to support the EMS Transportation Reimbursement Act which will prove to be critical to the future well-being of Montgomery County.