

**Testimony of Kevin McGee
Chief of the Prince William County
Department of Fire and Rescue**

Thank you members of the Montgomery County Council for the opportunity to provide you testimony regarding EMS reimbursement legislation.

I'm Kevin McGee, Chief of the Prince William County Department of Fire and Rescue.

Prince William County has over 800 operational volunteers and 535 career personnel.

Our annual call volume is approximately 33,000 emergency incidents, over 75% of which are medical emergencies.

The growth in Prince William County has placed greater service delivery demands on the fire and rescue system.

The economic reality most every jurisdiction in the nation now finds itself in necessitates evaluation of the range of possible revenue options, which balancing the financial impact on our citizens.

Prince William County implemented an EMS Billing Program as a new source of revenue that doesn't have any additional financial impact on our citizens.

We began to capture EMS billing revenue in fiscal year 2011 and our current annual revenue projection is 5 million dollars. Our reimbursement program is a soft or compassionate approach, as I see is in your proposed legislation.

EMS transport services are already included in consumer insurance premiums and by not billing for these services, would have resulted in Prince William County losing legitimate revenue. The same legitimate revenue that Montgomery County Fire and Rescue is currently not capturing.

One EMS reimbursement misconception is that citizens who need help won't call 911 for concern about the cost.

This is simply unfounded and I can tell you that Prince William County has not experienced any decline in EMS incidents.

In fact we're having an increase in EMS call volume consistent with the increase in our population.

Critical to any EMS reimbursement program's success is an outreach program to provide accurate information to the citizens to include your soft billing approach.

Since the program's initiation, a small number of citizen questions have been received and have been easily satisfied with accurate information.

The EMS Billing Program has financially supported critically needed enhancements to Prince William County's fire and rescue system.

Our Fire and Rescue Association that oversees the fire and rescue system and includes our eleven volunteer chiefs, unanimously endorses the initiation of our EMS billing program. This revenue has funded:

- system-wide needs such as the staffing of additional EMS transport units,
- the modernization of sophisticated biomedical equipment and other EMS equipment,
- and providing enhanced EMS training so we can even better care for the patients we serve.

Our experience with the initiation of an EMS reimbursement program has had no downside impact to service delivery, doesn't directly cost our citizens anything and is directly responsible for critical EMS system improvements.

In review of the proposed amended legislation, your program is very Montgomery County resident friendly. I believe you will experience the positive impacts we have experienced from our program.

I recognize you have an important policy issue before you. I hope I was able to provide reassurance, based on the Prince William County experience, that a properly implemented EMS reimbursement program can create a new and stable revenue source for fire and rescue system-wide needs that won't financially impact your citizens.