



September 22, 2009

The Honorable Olympia Snowe
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Snowe:

On behalf of the membership of the Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on your proposed air ambulance amendment to the America's Healthy Future Act. We would be very pleased to work with you toward ensuring the highest quality standards for the air medical industry.

AAMS is the only trade association serving the entire air and critical care ground medical transport community. AAMS strives to enhance the medical transport industry by promoting the highest level of industry safety; promoting quality patient care; inspiring commitment to the industry's work, causes, and viability; and providing superior service to its members.

While AAMS strongly supports enhanced data collection and the establishment of uniform safety and quality standards, we are concerned that the full effects of the requirements outlined in your amendment cannot be thoroughly gauged in such a short time frame. We are sure you will agree that we must ensure that any legislation does not negatively affect patients' access to this timely medical intervention, particularly in rural areas.

The air medical industry is extremely diverse. Therefore, any sweeping regulatory or legislative change may have variable effects in different areas of the country. What some may determine to be appropriate utilization standards in Maine may not be appropriate for larger, more rural states, such as Montana. Given the summary nature of your amendment, we find it difficult to accurately assess the impact these changes would have on the air medical industry as a whole in the timeframe provided. The issues you are attempting to address with this amendment are too important to move forward without a more comprehensive vetting by stakeholders.

As you are aware, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee is currently considering legislation that would establish a comprehensive study of the air medical industry by the General Accounting Office (GAO). AAMS fully supports this study and suggests that the issues

526 KING STREET
SUITE 415
ALEXANDRIA, VA
22314-3143

(703) 836-8732
FAX (703) 836-8920
www.aams.org

raised in your amendment would also benefit from a GAO analysis. Thus, we ask that you either change the language of this amendment to require the GAO to conduct a study on the items outlined in this amendment, or through your position on the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, work to expand the language in that legislation to expand the requirement of the GAO study to include the items outlined in this amendment. Furthermore, we offer the assistance of our organization to work with you and your staff, while the GAO conducts its study, to assess the items outlined in your amendment and identify ways in which AAMS can support their intent and the best means of their implementation.

We appreciate your recognition of air medical services as a critical role in the healthcare delivery system. AAMS would be pleased to work with you and any other legislative or regulatory authority in ensuring the highest quality and safety standards for the air medical industry.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact the AAMS government relations staff at 703-836-8732 for any assistance.

Sincerely,



Sandra Kinkade
President



Dawn Mancuso
Executive Director/CEO

Cc: Senator Max Baucus
Senator Jay Rockefeller