

# CAA Fights for First Responder Funding

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CA, UNITED STATES, March 23, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New website,

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*California Ambulance Association (CAA) President  
Jimmy Pierson.*

California ranks 46th of 50 states when it comes to Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for our first responders. In the late 1990's the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate was \$135 per transport and now more than two decades later, that rate has actually gone down to just \$111. Florida pays nearly double, Texas triple and Arizona nearly four times what California pays its first responders who serve our most vulnerable communities.

“The EMS industry is at a crossroads.” said International Association of EMTs and Paramedics, SEIU Local 5000, National Director Philip Petit. “It's been more than two decades since insurance payouts for EMS agencies have been updated, and after two years of unrelenting pandemic pressure, our frontline heroes need action. Higher payouts mean better wages, and better wages mean our first line of defense in healthcare gets the support they need to protect families across the nation.”

In less than a decade Medi-Cal has doubled its enrollment from seven million people in 2014 to 14 million people today. The number of calls for non-ambulatory services from Medi-Cal patients has shot up as well, but the staggeringly low reimbursement rate means that ambulance companies lose money on every Medi-Cal response and our first responder EMS workers are barely making more than minimum wage. Fast food workers make more.

“Over the past twenty years, wages, insurance, and fuel have all gone up, but Medi-Cal reimbursements went down,” said Melissa Harris, President and CEO of AmbuServe Ambulance. “The rates currently paid by Medi-Cal to California's ambulance services are no longer sustainable. I want to pay my employees a fair wage, but with the rising costs for businesses in California, I need the state's help to give my team members the pay they deserve.”

"Decades of below-cost Medi-Cal reimbursement, combined with Medi-Cal expansion, is impacting our ability to recruit and retain qualified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics" said California Ambulance Association (CAA) President Jimmy Pierson. "Unfortunately, this issue has been building long before the pandemic started, and it now threatens to undermine the stability of California's emergency and non-emergency transport infrastructure. We are honored to stand with all of the regional ambulance associations, as well as our labor partners to bring this issue to light. Never before has our industry been so united in making sustainable and equitable change."



[www.fundfirstresponders.org](http://www.fundfirstresponders.org)

The California Ambulance Association (CAA) is part of a coalition of first responders, healthcare workers and labor organizations who are advocating for a fair Medi-Cal reimbursement rate of \$350 per transport, which is still below the cost per service, but will attract new EMS recruits and fairly compensate current EMS workers to improve retention. Learn more at [www.fundfirstresponders.org](http://www.fundfirstresponders.org).

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