

October 19, 2017

The Honorable Richard Hudson
U.S. House of Representatives
429 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joseph P. Kennedy
U.S. House of Representatives
434 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Hudson and Kennedy:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and our more than 42,000 members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 3780, the Air Ambulance Quality and Accountability Act. This important legislation will help ensure that patients across the country have access to high-quality air ambulance services, as well as improve safety on-board for both patients and crew.

ENA is proud to count among its membership nurses who work as part of air ambulance flight crews, including those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while working to save the lives of others. As a critical part of any effective trauma system, air ambulance services offer specialized, risky and lifesaving services to patients, many of whom are critically ill or injured and have no control over their method of transport or choice in the particular transporting agency.

As you know, Medicare policies have a significant impact on the way services are provided throughout the country. Medicare-reimbursed providers must typically adhere to a certain set of standards and quality requirements, yet no current standards exist for air ambulance providers participating in the Medicare program. A lack of minimum standards in this field undermines the quality and consistency of care received by patients, fails to recognize the varying degrees of capability of providers and does not do enough to ensure the safety of both patients and crew.

The Air Ambulance Quality and Accountability Act will help improve care for patients who need air ambulance transport by establishing minimum standards for providers, requiring providers to report on costs in the future, linking future payments to quality outcomes and clinical capability and requiring the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) to study air ambulance payments and make additional recommendations to improve access and quality.

Reimbursing providers based on cost, clinical capability and quality promotes a robust and high-quality air ambulance system, especially in rural areas, where these services are often needed most. A focus on quality would also lead to a closer examination and implementation of needed reforms with regard to patient and crew safety.

As professionals on the frontlines of our nation's health care system, emergency nurses and air ambulance crews are critical to providing lifesaving emergency care. We would like to thank you for introducing this legislation and your leadership on this critical issue. If you have any questions, please contact ENA's Chief Government Relations Officer, Richard Mereu, at 202-741-9373.

Sincerely,



Karen K. Wiley, MSN, RN, CEN
2017 ENA President