



## A Global Medical Response Solution

March 15, 2022

Senate Standing Committee Health & Welfare

Dear Chairman Alvarado, Vice Chair Meredith and Committee Members,

Ground ambulance services across the State of Kentucky continue to take on substantial risk every day to respond to, treat and transport patients to and from homes, accident scenes, hospitals, and other healthcare institutions. Our frontline first responders have been nothing less than heroic in times of need, evidenced by the COVID-19 response and recent disasters. Our Commonwealth's EMS system is facing a crippling workforce shortage, a long-term problem that has been building for more than a decade. The pandemic exacerbated this shortage amidst surging demand, burnout, and wage pressures. As part of Kentucky's first response system, American Medical Response and LifeGuard appreciates the continued public support, as well as the support of our legislature, over the past few years.

House Bill 777 seeks to make bold changes to the statewide ambulance system, including allowing cities, counties, and hospitals to obtain a Certificate of Need (CON) to operate ambulance services without the requirement of a substantive review process. While we wholeheartedly support improvement to efficiencies in ambulance response and transport, we recognize that these proposed changes are not targeted at addressing the root cause being the EMT and Paramedic workforce shortage.

Nonetheless, while this bill enables cities, counties, and hospitals to obtain a CON through a non-substantive review, it does not expressly allow these entities the flexibility to contract services through a state-licensed provider. This would limit their ability to contain costs and capital expenses, receive the expertise needed to establish a service that is compliant with applicable state and federal laws, and provide the most economic solutions for the citizens of Kentucky. Furthermore, it restricts private ambulance organizations from offering cost-effective services and clinical expertise to counties and cities. AMR and Lifeguard ambulance would support the following amendment to HB 777, which would remedy the issue this bill creates.

**Notwithstanding any section or subsection of this statute, nothing within any section or subsection of this statute prohibits any person, as that term is defined in KRS 216B.015(22), from entering into any contract or agreement with a Kentucky licensed ground ambulance service for the provision of services.**

This amendment would allow cities, counties, and hospitals the flexibility needed to find the appropriate resources when seeking to become part of the solution. Public-private partnerships, shared risk and financial resources, and innovative collaborations are what is needed to begin to solve the issue of healthcare resources across the country and in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. AMR and Lifeguard would firmly support such change for the benefit of healthcare facilities, government jurisdictions and the patients we all seek to serve.

We sincerely appreciate your consideration and support of the above amendment.

Respectfully,

Paul Phillips  
Regional Director

