

Legislative Action

In the January 21, 2009, Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee meeting, the base budget recommendation was approved which included the elimination of the entire Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Grants program, this includes eliminating “grants to EMS agencies, CPR training for 10th graders, and the statewide trauma program.” The Bureau of EMS, Utah Department of Health, receives dedicated credit funding to support these programs for the improvement of statewide delivery of EMS.

Significance of EMS Grants Program

In a recent ceremony, Mayor Bloomberg provided recognition to EMS agencies and first responders for their efforts with the recent plane crash in the Hudson River. Recognizing the heroic efforts of the pilot, flight crew, and all responders the Mayor realized that the emergency health care delivery and public safety systems were well equipped and trained to quickly respond to this incident. When asked why they were so ready for this incident the responders all commented that they train every week for incidents like this and just “kicked into gear” their response.

Utah’s EMS agencies and hospitals receive funding from the EMS grants program to improve their readiness and availability to meet the needs of our citizens on a daily basis and in the face of a disaster. Approximately 29% percent of the EMS agency grants over the past 5 years were spent to train the state EMS personnel and 40% of the funds supported equipment ambulances, over 3.5 million dollars. EMS agencies are highly dependant on these funds, especially in rural Utah.

Funding for the trauma system has allowed our hospitals to be designated as trauma centers ensuring that the most severely injured patients are transported to the right facility at the right time. Utah has doubled the number of hospitals designated as trauma centers over the past five years. These hospitals have met stringent national criteria for training, equipment, quality, and availability of specialists. It is documented that a person has a 25% better chance to survive a trauma incident if they are transported to a designated trauma center.

The EMS grants program trauma system funding, also support the EMS for Children program which specifically provides specialized training to EMS personnel and hospitals to meet the needs of one of our most vulnerable populations. Significant strides have been made over the past several years which rank Utah as one of the best EMSC programs in the country, meeting the majority of national performance measures.

Jointly, EMS agencies and hospitals have trained and exercised together to ensure their response to the communities health and medical needs are met with the most highly skilled and equipped healthcare workers our citizens deserve. The major objective of our emergency health care delivery system is to reduce death and disability. This can not be achieved without a trained and equipped workforce.

The grants program also supports training for all 10th graders so they know what to do until an ambulance arrives. Citizen training is key to the survivability of victims of injury or illness. Successful saves by students have been formally recognized by the Legislature for many years.

Immediate Call to Action

Today is an important time to call your senator or representative to help restore items in the base budget that were recommended for elimination. Please educate your legislator and especially members of the Executive Appropriations Committee TODAY to explain the impact of the elimination of these funds to your organization and ultimately the citizens and visitors to our state. There may also be legislative movement to establish an Office or Division of Emergency Medical Services within state government giving EMS system constituents a stronger voice than they have had before.

To address the issue at hand, please ask to **SPECIFICALLY RESTORE ITEMS 042 (EMS grants), 043 (high school training), and 044 (trauma)** on the Base Budget Recommendations from Health and Human Services and support the creation of the Office of EMS.

Executive Appropriations Committee

<http://www.le.state.ut.us> To find an email address or phone number

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