



Emergency Medical Services Reimbursement for On-scene Care and Support (EMS ROCS) Act of 2026

Led in the Senate by: Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.); Tina Smith (D-Minn.); John Fetterman (D-Penn.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Michael Bennet (D-Colo.)

Introduced in the House by: Rep. Becca Balint (D-VT-At-Large)

Background: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are a crucial part of the healthcare system. EMS providers are the frontline and, frequently, the first point of contact for patients. In rural communities, the demand for EMS services for medical emergencies continues to increase—especially for Medicare beneficiaries, who make up about 40% of patients treated by EMS.

In recent years, around 22% of 911 calls to EMS involved medical conditions that would not require transport to a hospital, including after a fall or for minor medical emergencies. However, Medicare does not currently reimburse EMS for services provided unless the patient is transported to the hospital via ambulance. As a result, EMS providers are obligated to respond and deliver vital services on-scene—without reimbursement—to persons who do not require or who refuse to be transported to a hospital.

Inflationary pressures, coupled with the increasing volume of services that are ineligible for reimbursement, pose a serious threat to EMS, particularly those serving rural and older communities. These challenges have forced EMS providers to curtail service and, in some areas, go as far as shutting down their services entirely.

Legislation: The *EMS ROCS Act* would amend title XVII of the *Social Security Act* to provide Medicare reimbursement for care provided by EMS when no transportation to the hospital is provided. The bill will benefit Medicare beneficiaries who rely on EMS by aligning the reimbursement model with the services performed.

The bicameral legislation will benefit Medicare beneficiaries who rely on EMS by aligning the reimbursement model with the services performed. The bill will also provide crucial reimbursement for EMS providers for their integral role in bringing essential healthcare services to where people need them most.

Supporting Organizations:

The *EMS ROCS Act* is endorsed by the American Ambulance Association, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), National Rural Health Association, and the Vermont Ambulance Association.