

November 7, 2019

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Education and Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education and Labor
2462 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

passage of those laws in 2015 and 2017, no air ambulance providers left the state. North Dakota is about as rural as you can get and we write to tell you from our perspective, the air ambulance companies themselves have dispelled the myth that they will flee from the rural areas if these reasonable regulations are passed by Congress.

Rural Americans are the most at risk under the status quo of surprise bills. With air ambulance charges unconstrained, rural residents are paying more and more of their health care dollars to air ambulance operators, through surprise bills for those who need air medical transport and through premiums from everyone else. With all the strains our rural health care system is facing, we cannot allow these providers to charge unlimited amounts, particularly as Congress works to limit balances bills generally.


3 U R Y L V L R Q V O L N H W K R H L C O W K S A C H O S P E C I A L L Y / section 105 regarding air ambulance protections, allows the marketplace to work. Under this legislation, the providers can negotiate contracts with health insurers at rates the market deems appropriate. If an air ambulance provider chooses not to negotiate with health insurers or is unable to reach agreement, this legislation ensures the market average rate of payment is provided for their services, meaning this legislation allows those rates to move over time and adjust as the marketplace changes.

Should a state find that it has an inadequate number of providers under this broad-based solution, an outcome we find very unlikely, state insurance regulators would be happy to work with federal officials to make geographic adjustments to the required payment rates. We suggest establishing geographic regions in consultation with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. We would also support an amendment to allow individual insurance commissioners to request an adjustment. W K H L U V W D W H T V J H R J U D S K L A l l o w i n g f o r R Q V R U S such adjustments would enable states and the federal government to work together to assure that rural areas continue to receive the air ambulance services they need.

Our states have a mix of air ambulance providers, some are independent, stand-alone operators and some are hospital

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Jon Godfread
Commissioner
North Dakota Insurance Department



Lori K. Wing-Heier
Director
Alaska Department of Commerce, Community &
Economic Development



Allen W. Kerr
Commissioner
Arkansas Insurance Department



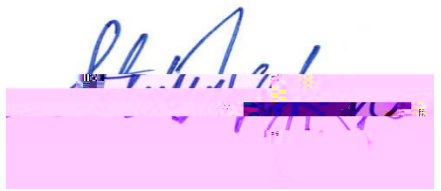
Ricardo Lara
Commissioner
California Department of Insurance



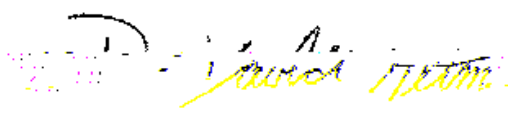
Andrew N. Mais
Commissioner
Connecticut Insurance Department



Trinidad Navarro
Commissioner
Delaware Department of Insurance



Stephen C. Taylor
Commissioner
District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities
and Banking



David Altmaier
Commissioner
Florida Office of Insurance Regulation

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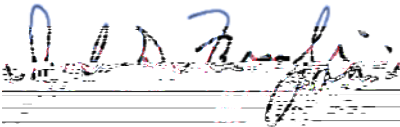
John F. King
Commissioner
Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner



Barbara D. Richardson
Commissioner
Nevada Department of Business & Industry
Division of Insurance



John Elias
Commissioner
New Hampshire Insurance Department



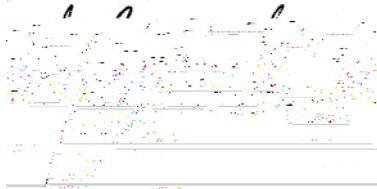
John G. Franchini
Superintendent
New Mexico Office of the Superintendent of Insurance



Mike Causey
Commissioner
North Carolina Department of Insurance



Jillian Froment
Director
Ohio Department of Insurance



Glen Mulready
Commissioner
Oklahoma Insurance Department

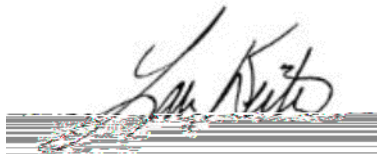
Jessica K. Altman
Commissioner
Pennsylvania Insurance Department



Javier Riviera Rios
Commissioner
Puerto Rico Office of the Commissioner of Insurance



Raymond G. Farmer
Director
South Carolina Department of Insurance



Larry Deiter
Director
South Dakota Division of Insurance



Hodgen Mainda
 Commissioner
 Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance



Kent Sullivan
 Commissioner
 Texas Department of Insurance



Scott A. White
 Commissioner
 Virginia Bureau of Insurance



James A. Dodrill
 Commissioner
 West Virginia Offices of the Insurance Commissioner



Mark Afable
 Commissioner
 Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance



Jeff Rude
 Insurance Commissioner
 Wyoming Insurance Department