

# TRAUMA COALITION

December 2, 2008

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
U.S. Senate  
Chairman  
Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Harkin:

**The undersigned organizations urge you to support funding for Title XII of the Public Health Service Act, trauma care system planning and development, at the authorized level of \$10 million in the pending FY 2009 omnibus appropriations package.**

Administered by the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) and authorized through FY 2012, the Trauma-EMS Program has distributed approximately \$31 million since 1992 to every state and territory to develop and implement trauma care systems.

We were extremely pleased that the House Subcommittee-passed Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill included \$10 million to reconstitute the HRSA Trauma-EMS program, the amount authorized for the program. While appropriators were unable to meet to resolve differences in the House Subcommittee and Senate Committee-passed versions of the FY 2009 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills prior to passing a continuing resolution, we have learned that the House and Senate are preparing to reconcile the FY 2009 Labor-HHS-Education legislation in preparation of an omnibus appropriations bill. We urge you to support the inclusion of the House language that includes \$10 million for the Trauma-EMS program in the final omnibus appropriations package.

According to a report by the Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality (AHRQ), trauma injuries were the second most expensive health care condition in 2005, costing approximately \$72 billion. This includes money spent for doctor visits, clinics, emergency room visits, hospital room stays, home health care, and prescription drugs.

Traumatic injury is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 1 through 44. In addition to the horrendous attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. has recently experienced a number of deadly natural disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes and must be prepared to respond to potential terrorist threats, chemical spills, and other health care emergencies. The nation's trauma and emergency medical systems are designed to respond quickly and efficiently to deliver seriously-injured individuals to the appropriate trauma center hospital within the "golden hour" – the time period when medical intervention is most effective in saving lives and saving function. To that end, organized systems of trauma care in every community in every state require thoughtful development and constant coordination. Clearly, we can do better in our efforts to respond to a number of goals put forth by the Institute of Medicine in 1999, particularly that Congress "support a greater national commitment to, and support of, trauma care systems at the federal, state, and local levels."

To achieve this goal, the Trauma-EMS program provides grants to states and other eligible entities to improve trauma care systems planning and development. The program requires states and HRSA to establish model criteria for training EMS personnel and mandates the development of standards and requirements for the development of Level I, II, III and IV trauma centers.

While injury prevention programs have greatly reduced death and disability, severe injuries will continue to occur. Therefore, it is essential that every American have access to a trauma system that provides definitive care as quickly as possible. Strong federal support for Title XII will help those states and communities that are in need of solid infrastructure to provide effective and efficient care to severely injured patients.

We urge you to help us finish this important task so that all Americans wherever they live in every state have access to quality trauma care. You can do this by supporting **\$10 million for the Trauma-EMS Program in the final FY 2009 omnibus appropriations bill** today.

Sincerely,

Advocates for EMS  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for the Surgery of Trauma  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons  
American College of Surgeons  
American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Trauma Society  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Coalition for American Trauma Care  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma  
Emergency Nurses Association  
National Association of State EMS Officials  
Society of Trauma Nurses

**Legislative Language Requested for FY 2009:**

Trauma-EMS            \$10 million

**Report Language Requested for FY 2009:**

*Trauma Care*

The Committee provides \$10,000,000 for trauma/emergency medical services. This crucial program provides grants to states to support the development and enhancement of the basic infrastructure of trauma systems. It is intended to improve the Nation's overall trauma care systems, which are constantly activated to respond to a wide range of natural and man-made disasters.