December 10, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Howard Zucker MD, JD, LLM

Commissioner

New York State Department of Health

Corning Tower Empire State Plaza

Albany, NY 12237

**RE: Prioritizing EMS personnel in vaccine distribution**

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

[name of your organization] appreciates the efforts your offices have undertaken to prioritize the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines once they are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. **I am writing to urge you to adopt the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that prioritized emergency medical services (EMS) personnel in Phase 1a.** This recommendation is also consistent with the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccines (2020) that prioritizes first responders, including ambulance emergency medical technicians (EMTs), paramedics, and personnel in Phase 1a of the vaccine allocation plan. Both the CDC and the NAS concluded that paid and unpaid person serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct and indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials should be the first to receive the vaccine.

[insert description of your organization, including number of employees/workforce members, locations you serve, and how many patients to whom you typically provide services]

[insert your organization’s name] serves as the backbone of this community’s 911 emergency response. Our EMS teams are often the first health care teams to encounter patients who are sick and/or suspect they might have COVID-19. This community has directly relied upon our EMS personnel to control the pandemic. Our ambulance personnel, both those serving as the emergency medical response system and in coordinating care through non-emergency transports of patients between facilities and/or the patients’ homes are essential to our community’s response.

Further, given that our personnel operate in an uncontrolled environment and the confined space of the back of an ambulance while caring for COVID-19 patients, we place ourselves at extraordinary risk of contracting the virus that is at least that of, if not moreso than, our hospital-based healthcare colleagues. **Given the critical and heightened role that ambulance providers serve during the pandemic, we urge you to recognize the essential role of ambulance services and prioritize vaccinating our personnel in the top tier of distribution once the vaccine is available**.

[insert organization] would welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource for you throughout this crisis. If you have additional questions or would like further information about our members’ response to the pandemic, please do not hesitate to reach out to [insert your contact information].

Sincerely,