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American
Heart
Association

American
Stroke
Association

Great Rivers Affiliate
1010 Mumma Road
Wormleysburg, PA 17043
www.heart.org

November 28, 2011

Joseph Schmider, Director
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
PA Department of Health
Room 606 Health & Welfare Building
625 Forster Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0701

Dear Mr. Schmider:

On behalf of the American Heart Association, the American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA), and the thousands of volunteers that contribute their time and talent to our organization in Pennsylvania, I would like to submit this letter in support of the Department's proposed Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regulations, as required through Act 37 of 2009. Overall, the proposed regulations will go far to advance the AHA/ASA's mission to build lives free of cardiovascular disease and stroke. The regulations provide the necessary coordination and oversight of pre-hospital care across the Commonwealth that effectively integrates a broad spectrum of general and specialty services.

Specifically, we are encouraged by the emphasis on data collection and reporting that will help inform decision-makers about gaps in services, quality and outcomes to guide the future of EMS in PA. Outlining specific licensure, training, and scope of practice requirements for EMS agencies and providers will promote a higher caliber of services and individuals providing care in the EMS field. Lastly, we are very pleased to see the inclusion of language to require those patients with special needs - specifically those suspected to require percutaneous coronary interventions or care for treating acute stroke - to be transported to a receiving facility capable of providing advanced care for such conditions.

As a whole, the proposed EMS regulations will go a long way in improving emergency care throughout Pennsylvania and the AHA/ASA is pleased to offer support to them. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the Department of Health, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services to advance the work of pre-hospital care to further reduce death and disability from cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ebersole
Pennsylvania Government Relations Director