



## OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

**Michael R. Criss**  
**First Selectman, Town of Harwinton**  
***HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE***  
March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Good afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 6885 "An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement Rates".

### **H.B. 6885 "An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursements Rates".**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed "An Act Concerning Medicaid Reimbursement Rates." The Town of Harwinton is in support of H.B. 6885.

Please support Section 3 of HB-6885 which increases the Medicaid reimbursement rate for ambulance services to help address growing concerns regarding costs associated with providing emergency medical services (EMS).

The Town of Harwinton is no different than other municipalities regarding the many challenges in providing EMS services in our communities, including increasing call volumes, staffing shortages, rising staffing costs, rising equipment and medical supply, insurance, and diesel fuel costs. However, one of the biggest concerns is the state's very low Medicaid reimbursement rate. For example in Harwinton, just to get an ambulance to a call costs the town \$700 +/-, Medicaid and Medicare will cover roughly \$200 of this call leaving the rest of the cost on the patient who may or may not have the ability to pay in full even after collection agencies and small claims court are added to this.

Increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rate to mirror the federal Medicare reimbursement rate would make a huge difference in assisting municipalities in providing citizens with emergency medical services. In addition, increasing the EMS Medicaid rate will render Connecticut eligible for additional federal funding.

The Medicaid reimbursement rate for ambulance services is 50% of the federal Medicare rate and is simply not adequate to cover the costs of providing timely emergency medical care.

Please increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate to 90% of the Medicare rates across all billable codes for all ambulance services and 100% of the Medicare mileage reimbursement.

## **TOWN OF HARWINTON**

100 BENTLEY DRIVE  
HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791  
Tele: (860) 485-9051 • Fax: (860) 485-0051



## OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

By taking these initial steps this will strongly help to keep ambulance services in business.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of H.B. 6885 on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Criss', is written over a horizontal line.

Michael R. Criss  
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton  
Vice Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments  
Legislative Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments

## TOWN OF HARWINTON

100 BENTLEY DRIVE  
HARWINTON, CONNECTICUT 06791  
Tele: (860) 485-9051 • Fax: (860) 485-0051

Web Site:  
[www.harwinton.us](http://www.harwinton.us)

Email:  
[1stselectman@harwinton.us](mailto:1stselectman@harwinton.us)



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

***Raised Bill No. 6885***

LCO No. 5090



Referred to Committee on HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced by:  
(HS)

***AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID PAYMENT RATES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) The Commissioner of Social  
2 Services, within available appropriations, shall increase Medicaid rates  
3 of payment for services provided by individual fee-for-service health  
4 care providers to the following per cent of the Medicare rates for the  
5 same services: (1) Seventy per cent for the fiscal year ending on June 30,  
6 2024, (2) seventy-five per cent for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2025,  
7 (3) eighty-five per cent for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2026, (4)  
8 ninety-five per cent for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2027, and (5)  
9 one hundred per cent for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2028, and  
10 each fiscal year thereafter.

11 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) The Commissioner of Social  
12 Services shall provide Medicaid reimbursement, to the extent  
13 permissible under federal law, for school-based health services,  
14 including, but not limited to: (1) Educational services considered  
15 psycho-educational and informational, (2) weight-reduction programs  
16 or preventative counseling such as nutrition and physical activity

17 counseling, (3) all screenings for social determinants of health,  
18 including, but not limited to, suicide risk, depression, anxiety,  
19 nutritional needs and screening, brief intervention and referral to  
20 treatment for substance use disorders or risk of such disorders, (4)  
21 preventative counseling for students who screen positive for mental  
22 health needs but are not currently receiving services from a mental  
23 health counselor, and (5) dental screenings. For purposes of this  
24 subsection, "educational services considered psycho-educational and  
25 informational" means sharing of information and support to help a  
26 student better understand and cope with a health condition or illness.

27 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall amend the Medicaid  
28 state plan if necessary to provide such reimbursement and shall set  
29 reimbursement at a level sufficient to ensure an adequate pool of  
30 providers for such services.

31 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The Commissioner of Social  
32 Services shall: (1) Increase the Medicaid rates of payment for emergency  
33 medical transportation services and costs by ten per cent for the fiscal  
34 year ending on June 30, 2024, and ten per cent for each fiscal year  
35 thereafter until such rates are equal to Medicare rates of payment for the  
36 same services and costs, and (2) provide annual rate increases thereafter  
37 for such services and costs to the same extent Medicare rates are  
38 increased for such services and costs. For purposes of this subsection,  
39 "services and costs" includes, but is not limited to, advanced life  
40 support, basic life support and mileage rates.

41 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall amend the Medicaid  
42 state plan if necessary to implement the provisions of subsection (a) of  
43 this section.

44 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) The Commissioner of Social Services  
45 shall study Medicaid rates of payment for long-term acute care hospitals  
46 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation  
47 Facilities and providers of methadone maintenance treatment, as  
48 defined in section 17b-280c of the general statutes, to determine whether

49 Medicaid rates of payment for services provided by such hospitals and  
50 providers are sufficient. Not later than October 1, 2023, the  
51 commissioner shall file a report, in accordance with the provisions of  
52 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of  
53 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human  
54 services on the (1) results of the study, (2) recommendations for any  
55 changes in such rates of payment, and (3) cost to the state to provide any  
56 recommended increases in such rates.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**Statement of Purpose:**

To increase Medicaid payment rates for services provided by individual, fee-for-service providers and emergency medical transportation providers to Medicare rates for the same services and require a study of Medicaid payment rates for certain long-term acute care hospitals and methadone maintenance providers.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*