



Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association

Post Office Box 3945
Englewood, Colorado 80155
Phone: (720) 874-8116
Fax: (720) 862-2181

www.colofirechiefs.org

Please Support of House Bill 08-1334 Health Insurance for Emergency Services Volunteers

What the Bill Does

- Grants the authority for municipalities and districts to provide group health care coverage to emergency services volunteers and the authority for a municipality or district to participate in a health insurance pool for qualified emergency services volunteers.
- Allows the governing body of each emergency service provider the discretion to negotiate the details related to the procurement and administration of the insurance contracts.
- Specifies that bona fide volunteers and emergency service providers fall within the purview of existing group sickness and accident insurance law.

Why the Bill is Needed

- 62% of the fire departments in the state are all-volunteer. An additional 27% of the fire departments are combination career and volunteer, relying on volunteer firefighters to supplement the paid staff. There are an estimated 9,450 active volunteer firefighters in the state (about 63% of all firefighters).
- Across the nation and in Colorado, the number of volunteer firefighters has been declining for more than a decade. While state and local governments have recognized the decreasing numbers of volunteers, they have been hard pressed to identify specific measures to control the decline and recruit new volunteers.
- Since 9/11 the requirements placed on emergency services personnel (paid and volunteer) have increased dramatically. The additional training requirements alone have added to the problem of volunteer recruitment and retention.
- While the Volunteer Firefighter Pension program is one form of recruitment and retention, in a mobile society with high costs of living, two income families, etc. it is not a "cure all" for our recruitment and retention needs. In addition, many volunteers will not be able to meet the service requirement to be able to receive a pension benefit.
- There are a significant number of emergency services volunteers that do not have access to affordable health insurance. This bill could provide an immediate benefit that may make a difference in a volunteer's ability to stay within the community, and continue to serve.

We Urge Your Support of HB 08-1334

- HB 08-1334 will provide local governments a needed tool for the recruitment and retention of emergency services volunteers.

"Serving the Chief Fire Officers of Colorado Since 1968"