



Testimony
House Bill 1004
Senate Appropriations Committee – Human Resources Division
Thursday, March 9, 2023; 8:30 AM
North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association

Good morning, Chairman Dever and members of the committee. My name is Tyler Kientopf, I am the Vice President of the North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association's. I am here today in support of HB 1004.

The EMS unit's budget includes \$6.875 million in assistance to rural ambulance services to offset operational costs that are not recovered through the billing process. A recent collection of ambulance budget information found that, on average, it costs an ambulance service \$1,750 per call while the average reimbursement averages only \$750. Therefore, for ambulance to be sustainable they require a combination of local and state support along with the insurance reimbursements they receive. The legislature determines the disbursement of the state grant through a formula contained in HB 1294. Last biennium the appropriation was funded at only 29% of the formulas calculation. Based on our estimates, the legislature would need to appropriate approximately \$15 million to fully fund the formula for this biennium.

The Rural EMS Assistance Grant benefits approximately 89 ambulances across the state. EMS faces several challenges, including reimbursement, workforce challenges, and closures of neighboring ambulance services. Therefore, to ensure ambulance service sustainability across North Dakota it is important to provide adequate funding.

The budget contains an additional \$846,000 allocated for training grants. These grants are important to offset the cost of recruiting and training EMS providers across the state.

Additionally, the budget includes costs associated with purchasing ESO Solutions, a charting and data repository program, for all ambulance services. The state has previously paid for this, however the costs have increased significantly and the contract is set for renewal. The costs for each ambulance to purchase charting software separately only increases the cost more and services would be stuck to bear the cost.

Lastly, the EMS association wants to note the EMS unit has the least staff than any other state EMS office in the country, while they manage more programs than is typical of an EMS office. Therefore, the EMS association supports increasing the FTE's for the EMS unit to help ensure the EMS system receives necessary attention as we partner to develop and sustain an EMS system in North Dakota.

Executive Offices
1622 East Interstate Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58503



701-221-0567
ndemsa.office@ndemsa.org
www.ndemsa.org

We greatly appreciate the Legislatures commitment to rural ambulances. Your continued support is needed to ensure that the residents and visitors of North Dakota have reliable, high quality access to emergency medical services.

This concludes my testimony, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.