



January 7th, 2025

Senate Workforce Development Committee
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: Support for SB 2100

Chairman Wobbema & Committee Members,

Please accept this letter as support for SB 2100 as presented to the legislature. In April 2024, the Emergency Medical Services [EMS] Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services enacted new administrative rules that changed the landscape of EMS education. These rules required all initial entry certification programs to be administered through a licensed EMS training institute. Previously, the HHS Department licensed individual instructor coordinators with the authority to coordinate and deliver initial entry certification programs directly through HHS. Local EMS services could provide instructor coordinators or contract with other instructors throughout the state to conduct training programs locally.

The change in these rules created a significant void in our region for new Emergency Medical Technician and Emergency Medical Responder training programs. The Williston Fire Department is a licensed EMS training institute, and since the passage of the administrative rules, we have been overwhelmed with requests for assistance from neighboring rural services in Williams and our surrounding counties. We have received requests for training support as far away as Dunn County.

The primary reason provided by HHS for this significant change was to add a layer of oversight to initial entry programs and to increase the quality of education being provided that their department was unable to perform. This is leading to the regionalization of training. Although the principle behind this change is sound, there was no support provided to EMS training institutes to carry out this new responsibility. The Williston Fire Department never intended to provide training opportunities at this scale to our region and cannot do so without financial support. The only available option to fund this level of responsibility is through a significant fee increase that many rural ambulance services do not have the means to provide. The current EMS training grant is insufficient to support the cost of regionalized training programs.

We have already seen a reduction in new EMS providers in our region, and our neighboring services struggle every day to recruit and train new EMS providers. This legislation will restore the ability to recruit and train locally, a model the Williston Fire Department has found great success in.

Our department recognizes the motivation and need to implement solutions to improve the quality of EMS education in our region and throughout the state. By passing this legislation, the EMS Unit will have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive plan to address the issues surrounding EMS education and present it back to the legislature. For this plan to be effective and support rural ambulance services, funding must be included. We are committed to working with the EMS Unit of HHS to develop that plan. We ask for your support in recommending SB 2100 as a “do pass.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Clark', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Clark, EdD
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