

Testimony
Public Safety and Transportation Committee
Wednesday, June 2, 2010; 9:40 a.m.
North Dakota Department of Health

Good morning, Chairman O'Connell and members of the Public Safety and Transportation Committee. My name is Ed Gregoire, and I am the training coordinator for the Division of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma of the North Dakota Department of Health. I am here today on behalf of Division Director Tom Nehring to provide information about three issues related to emergency medical services funding.

In response to the Committee's specific request:

1. Issues with emergency medical services on Indian reservations, including ambulance response and funding concerns.

After Rolette County installed 911 services, the Devils Lake Public Service Answering Point (the county's dispatch service) had some questions about ambulance service areas and ambulance response. The basis for these questions was the Belcourt ambulance's desire to remain within the boundaries of the reservation and to serve only Native Americans. Late last year, our division met with stakeholders within the region to clarify the state rules concerning nearest ambulance response protocol and trauma system protocols.

State rules require an ambulance licensed in the state of North Dakota to respond to any and all emergencies when an ambulance response is necessary. A 2002 Attorney General's opinion stated, "Beginning June 1, 2002, ensure that the closest available emergency medical service is dispatched to the scene of medical emergencies, regardless of city, county or district boundaries." If a licensed ambulance service does not comply with these issues, the department will consider withdrawing its license. A reservation ambulance service is not required to be licensed by the state; however, if they are not licensed, they will not be eligible to receive certain grants. Belcourt has continued to maintain its license.

As to your second point, funding issues have not been communicated to us.

2. A status report on the distribution of grants to emergency medical services operations pursuant to Section 6 of 2009 Senate Bill No. 2004.

Thirty-nine ambulance services have been awarded grant monies in accordance with Section 6 of 2009 Senate Bill 2004. The total amount available in 2010 is \$1,151,386, and the awards range from \$2,080 to \$45,000 per year.

AMBULANCE SERVICE	GRANT AWARD	CONTRACTOR SHARE	TOTAL COSTS
Grenora Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
Medina Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
Divide County Ambulance District	\$45,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
Gackle Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
Wing Rural Ambulance	\$22,000.00	\$2,444.44	\$24,444.44
Killdeer Area Ambulance	\$27,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$30,000.00
Flasher Ambulance Service	\$13,000.00	\$1,444.44	\$14,444.44
McKenzie County Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
Bowman Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$11,250.00	\$56,250.00
Kidder County Ambulance	\$35,000.00	\$8,750.00	\$43,750.00
New England Ambulance	\$33,280.00	\$8,320.00	\$41,600.00
Maddock Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$11,250.00	\$56,250.00
Westhope Ambulance	\$44,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$55,000.00
Napoleon Ambulance Service	\$25,000.00	\$6,250.00	\$31,250.00
Richardton-Taylor Ambulance, Inc.	\$24,500.00	\$10,500.00	\$35,000.00
Towner County Ambulance	\$21,330.00	\$9,141.43	\$30,471.43
Turtle Lake Ambulance Service	\$27,000.00	\$11,571.43	\$38,571.43
Emmons County ALS Ambulance	\$20,000.00	\$8,571.43	\$28,571.43
Pembina Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$19,285.71	\$64,285.71
Wishek Ambulance	\$14,000.00	\$9,333.33	\$23,333.33
Kindred Area Ambulance Service	\$33,000.00	\$22,000.00	\$55,000.00
Rock Lake Ambulance Service	\$9,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$15,000.00
Billings County Ambulance Service	\$45,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$75,000.00
Mohall Ambulance Service	\$29,000.00	\$29,000.00	\$58,000.00
Wilton Rural Ambulance District	\$32,000.00	\$32,000.00	\$64,000.00
Velva Ambulance Service	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$70,000.00
Page Ambulance Service	\$11,000.00	\$11,000.00	\$22,000.00
Sargent County Ambulance- Forman	\$43,000.00	\$43,000.00	\$86,000.00
Lidgerwood Ambulance Service	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$40,000.00
Casselton Volunteer Ambulance Service	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$70,000.00
Bottineau Ambulance Service	\$21,000.00	\$31,500.00	\$52,500.00

Rolette Community Ambulance Service	\$34,923.00	\$52,384.50	\$87,307.50
Northwood Deaconess Health Center	\$19,000.00	\$28,500.00	\$47,500.00
Parshall Ambulance Service	\$15,800.00	\$23,700.00	\$39,500.00
McVille Community Ambulance Service	\$26,646.00	\$39,969.00	\$66,615.00
Community Volunteer EMS of LaMoure	\$7,300.00	\$10,950.00	\$18,250.00
Walhalla Ambulance Service	\$9,600.00	\$14,400.00	\$24,000.00
Hillsboro Ambulance Service	\$9,800.00	\$39,200.00	\$49,000.00
Sargent County Ambulance- Milnor	\$2,080.00	\$8,320.00	\$10,400.00
Total	\$1,104,259.00	\$669,035.72	\$1,773,294.72

To date, we have distributed \$260,106, with the balance to be distributed over the remainder of the year.

The 15 criteria used to determine grant eligibility and funding levels were applied to all ambulance services applying for the grants. The criteria includes number of providers, average age of providers, miles from closest ambulance, service area population, located in a city with a hospital, and miles from the nearest hospital. The grant funding is used to support staffing levels for ambulance services that may find staffing difficult at times.

3. A status report on the retention of a consultant to study issues affecting emergency medical services pursuant to Section 6 of 2009 Senate Bill No. 2004.

The Rural Improvement Grant was awarded through a competitive process to SafeTech Solutions, with a start date of April 12, 2010. The grant focuses on four major areas: (1) develop, implement and provide an access-critical ambulance service operations assessment process for the purpose of improving medical services delivery; (2) develop, implement and provide leadership-development training; (3) develop, implement and provide a biennial emergency medical services recruitment drive; and (4) provide regional assistance to ambulance services to develop a quality review process for emergency medical services personnel and a mechanism to report to medical directors.

SafeTech Solutions currently is working on three of the focus areas. They have developed a statewide survey tool that has been approved by the Department of Health, developed an ND EMS Medical Director Course, and established a curriculum for the leadership summits to be held in June and

July in eight communities in North Dakota, two in each of the four regions of the state.

Since the grant was awarded, SafeTech Solutions has attended the EMS Annual Conference in Minot, met with the leadership of the North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association, and interviewed in person and by telephone many people within the EMS community. In addition, they have been building a database specific to EMS in North Dakota and have held numerous meetings with the Department of Health.

The total grant award is \$497,263; to date, \$15,883 has been distributed to SafeTech Solutions.

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