



Testimony
House Bill 1493
Senate Human Service Committee
Wednesday, March 10 2021; 11:00 a.m.
North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Adam Parker, and I am the Chair of the North Dakota Emergency Medical Services Association's (NDEMSA) Advocacy Committee.

HB 1493 is the distribution formula for the Rural EMS Assistance Grant, which is a vital funding source for 100 rural ambulance services across North Dakota. The formula is logical as it determines a minimum reasonable budget for operating an ambulance, the estimated revenue generated from fee-for-service, and a local match based on property tax valuation. There is concern, however, among some of our members that the formula does not take into account other factors, such as distance from a hospital, distance from another ambulance, ALS or BLS, etc. All are important considerations for EMS system development in North Dakota. However, given that last year the formula was only funded at 55%, changes to the formula will only marginally increase some ambulance services funding while significantly decreasing others. Therefore, the EMS Association supports the formula in HB 1493 as consistency of the state assistance for rural ambulance services is important for budgeting and planning.

I would like to make note in Section 1(2)(a) of the proposed legislation the language states: “**median** number of runs...” and “**average** amount of reimbursement...” The use of the words median and average appear inconsistent with other areas of the bill. We prefer to use average when determining run volume for a service and medians when analyzing statewide financial data.

We also have concerns regarding Section 1(2)(b) regarding the determination of property tax valuation. We support that this data needs to be provided by the county auditor, as the Department of Health does not have expertise in this area, nor do the rural ambulance services. However, it does not specify who that data should be provided too and by when. Our concern is that without deadlines and clarity as to who the auditor must provide the data too, the department may need to delay grant distributions until that data can be obtained. Delaying grant distributions can put ambulance services in jeopardy as many rely on this funding for staffing and other necessary expenses. We ask that the committee consider this concern as they consider any amendments to the bill.

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