

Dear Chair Kunesh and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

We, the undersigned organizations, have come together to show our strong support for Senator Putnam's bill, SF 5005, to create an emergency medical services education facility in St. Cloud.

As you have heard throughout this session, EMS services are struggling to attract and retain talent. According to the 2022 Ambulance Industry Employee Turnover Study, EMS agencies experience a turnover rate of 24-36% each year, and many services report having as many as 30% of their positions unfilled. The Influencers of Retention in the Minnesota EMS Workforce report indicates 21,000 credentialed EMS providers in Minnesota let their licenses lapse since 2017: many young people under the age of 40. Additionally, fewer workers mean more overtime for the dedicated providers who do stay, which contributes to provider burnout and the inability to find a work/life balance.

Workforce challenges are a common denominator throughout all levels of healthcare and as stakeholders we are excited to come together to support and encourage young people to consider a career in emergency services. These lifesaving careers are critical in greater MN, and we need to act now to ensure we have a strong, vital system in place for generations to come.

For several years, CentraCare has been working on a similar and successful initiative with District 345 in New London Spicer. They have 23 students enrolled in their program this year. Approximately forty percent will go on to take the NREMT, and almost all who have attempted have passed. For those who have graduated 8 are currently employed in EMS, one is serving in the military, and another has become a paramedic. There are also about a dozen in college working towards nursing/pre-med tracks. There are also about a dozen in college working towards nursing/pre-med tracks. St. Cloud Technical & Community College offers a clear pathway for these students to continue their education as paramedics and is prepared to partner with the district to explore dual credit offerings for EMT courses.

Thank you for supporting education and prioritizing those who dedicate their careers to providing quality care for Minnesota. These steps are vital to increasing the number of young people who are entering the healthcare workforce and supporting their growth throughout their careers.

Respectfully,

