



Cloquet Area Fire District

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03/05/2024

Minnesota Legislators,

Hundreds of speakers across the state have sounded the alarm in recent months about the challenges ambulance service providers are facing. Inflation has significantly impacted the cost of capital equipment, supplies, and services. We are faced with workforce challenges that include decreased interest in becoming an EMS professional and the need to pay competitively, not only in our industry, but in competition with much less stressful, and much more lucrative careers. The ever-increasing call volume has widened the gap between the cost of providing service and the inadequate amounts received from billing reimbursements. I ask that you act now to impact Minnesota's ambulance service's future by supporting HF 3886, EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE AID that appropriates \$120M to aid struggling ambulance services in Minnesota.

An appropriation of financial aid to ambulance services should be looked at as a bridge; it will get us from our dire current position to one that includes innovation, long-term solutions, and unifying ideas to solidify a critical, essential public safety service in Minnesota. This funding will allow our ambulance services to invest in capital equipment, training and education, recruitment and retention of EMS professionals, and facilities improvements that will ensure a safe, healthy working environment. All of these investments will help curtail the greatest risk to EMS in our state, which is the loss of our most important resource- our responders!

We cannot let this issue remain a silent crisis. Those of us who have spent decades in EMS working in an ambulance know that the job is to respond no matter the conditions or circumstances. As the environment around providing ambulance service has changed, we have continued to adapt and respond to "hold the system together" for our communities. We are now faced with circumstances that are not viable to continue the provision of ambulance service in many areas of the state. I can't emphasize enough, the need to focus on the long-term sustainability of this critical public safety service, and again ask that you act by stabilizing our ambulance services by supporting HF 3886 EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE AID.

Sincerely,

Jesse Buhs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse Buhs".

Fire Chief

Cloquet Area Fire & Ambulance District

The mission of the Cloquet Area Fire District is to provide our member communities with unified fire protection, rescue, emergency medical services and public safety education. We will deliver these services with accountability, efficiency and quality.