



To whom it may concern,

This letter has been drafted jointly by the Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs (HCAPE) and International Association of EMTs and Paramedics (IAEP). HCAPE and IAEP are the Labor Unions that represent the paramedics, EMTs, and dispatchers of Hennepin EMS, Allina Health EMS, and M Health Fairview EMS respectively. Collectively, our members serve much of the Twin Cities metro area, as well as many rural communities throughout Minnesota. Our members have served the citizens of Minnesota since the inception of Emergency Medical Services (EMS). We have set the standard(s) for prehospital care across the country and continue to be innovators in high-quality prehospital care, leading the country in survival outcomes. Our members have served the State of Minnesota through unprecedented times, including a global pandemic, civil unrest, 35W bridge collapse, and other major incidents.

We do not support SF2691 which aims to change current Primary Service Area (PSA) Law and dismantle the current system. PSAs were enacted in the 1970s, after the competition for emergency patients was proven to have a negative impact on patient care. Other states that have implemented local control or sole competition models have not seen benefits, only a further complicated emergency response system.

Current PSA laws keep Minnesotans safe and enshrine health equity throughout the state. PSA laws protect rural communities from being abandoned by ambulance services and ensure that urban communities receive the same high-quality care across the board.

The current law works because it is not a patchwork of ambulance providers competing for the highest or best paying transports. PSAs are set service areas that provide care to broad communities, ensuring that no Minnesotan, community, neighborhood, or area is excluded. Additionally, the licensee must ensure 24-hour coverage, 365 days a year and must not deny ambulance care to anyone based on the individual's ability to pay.

We recognize that our current system has some challenges and needs policy and funding improvements. An audit released by the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) in February of 2022 recommended that PSA laws remain in place. In addition, that report recommended that a process in which local units of government can provide input be established.

As an industry, we are facing many challenges that impact our members including impacting workforce capacity, funding, insurance company reimbursements, low payouts from government payors, response times, and patient care. Choosing to dismantle our PSA system could result in further destabilization of the EMS system and further impact the EMS providers.

Changes to our PSA system could also lead to larger, for profit outstate providers breaking into Minnesota. If these companies are allowed to do so, it will change the entire nature of the EMS industry. In Minnesota, providers are local companies that are aware of the needs of their communities. They do not answer to investors or stockholders. There are many examples across the country of large for profit providers who enter a market, drive out competition, and leave communities without quality care when they cannot afford to pay more for it. Make no mistake, Minnesotans will be negatively impacted by changes to the PSA laws.

We strongly encourage you to consider the extreme gravity of this change and the impact it will have on emergency medical services (EMS) throughout the state. PSA law changes will negatively impact patient care and the delivery of EMS services. We believe strongly there is an approach that is agreeable on all sides and that improves the current system. We ask that SF2691 be thrown out. Instead of dismantling our current system, we ask for investment in the EMS system that address workforce development, funding and reimbursement, and the health & safety of EMS providers. We ask that the legislature follow the guidance of the OLA audit. The State of Minnesota has a unique opportunity to make marked improvements through funding and support to the EMS system that will allow Minnesota to continue to be a nationwide leader in prehospital care.

Respectfully,



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