



April 3, 2024

Re: Support for H.F. 3992 (Lislegard) – One-time Aid for Ambulance Services

Dear Representative Gomez and members of the House Taxes Committee

The Minnesota Ambulance Association proudly stands as the unified voice for EMS across the state, bringing together a diverse membership comprised of both governmental and non-governmental organizations and representing over 85% of the state's EMS response volume.

We are writing today in support of H.F. 3992 (Lislegard) which would provide one-time funding for struggling rural ambulance services.

As the Legislative Task Force traveled across rural Minnesota, a common discussion took place around the need for funding. During the field hearings, ambulance operators shared annual losses of \$300k, \$180k, and \$1.1 million. These losses are real and are being absorbed by cities, hospitals, and private providers. We trust you are as concerned as we are about how long these municipalities and organizations can continue to operate in the red.

The funding crisis we face today has been long coming. Over the past 20 years, reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid have been flat while the cost to operate ambulance services have increased. The workforce shortage we are experiencing is a direct effect of this inadequate funding and reimbursement. Ambulance operators cannot afford to pay their staff wages that compete with most other jobs in their communities. Not to mention the \$60+ million volunteer subsidy that has kept many rural ambulance services financially viable. If there are no people to do the work, there are no ambulances to respond. The time is now to focus on funding.

Once again, we appreciate the opportunity to share the importance of funding initiatives to support the sustainability of our rural ambulance industry. If you have any questions regarding the MAA's position, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael Juntunen, President
Minnesota Ambulance Association