

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

In regard to September 12th's Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee meeting concerning Current Capabilities, Future Demand, and Risks of Emergency Medical Services in Montana. I, as an Emergency Physician, Medical Director for several EMS agencies in Missoula and Lake County and member of EMSAC, can attest to the voracity of essentially all the comments put forth during the initial statement and comment portion of the SJ 13 meeting. I have seen first hand all the offered examples of the struggles and shortcomings of EMS in Montana. It is morally crushing and maddeningly frustrating, and we in Emergency Medicine and EMS have been sounding the call for assistance for many years.

In short, what these agencies need is funding for training (initial and ongoing), maintaining equipment, acquiring supplies etc. Mechanisms to improve acquisition and retention of medical staff and reimbursement for transport and the care provided. What the agencies do not need, is another study to determine the extent of the problem (we have adequate data) or more administrative positions. There is no dearth in talent only a consistent and withering access to adequate resources.

Deeming EMS as an essential service is a good first step, but as has occurred in other states, without accompanying funding, it rings hollow.

In the end it is about the patient, which will be any one of us, our relatives, our friends etc. What quality of care do we wish to be available for them, or ourselves, when that call is made?