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October 20, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Blunt, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), representing our nation's Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) thank you for your ongoing support of the EMS workforce. The Rural EMS Equipment and Training Assistance (REMSTEA) grants provide critical services to their patients and communities nationwide, especially in the most rural parts of our country.

As you work on the FY 2023 appropriations bills, we respectfully request the Labor-HHS-Education Conference Report include the Senate level of \$15 million for this critical program.

The COVID-19 public health emergency has reinforced the great need for increased federal support for EMS in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill for SIREN grants. Also known as the Rural EMS Equipment and Training Assistance (REMSTEA) program, within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), these funds are focused on ensuring rural areas have access to the EMS essential to every community

The additional burdens placed on EMS systems and personnel during this public health emergency have been challenging, even for the strongest systems. Across the country, in large urban areas as well as small rural communities, Paramedics and EMTs have been serving on the frontlines of our nation's war against the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the lack of federal investment in our nation's EMS system has always been a challenge, the pandemic exacerbated the challenge so much so that many EMS systems in our country are at the breaking point. Rural systems, struggling before the pandemic, are in most need. Most communities are facing crisis-level shortages of EMS personnel and many communities have been impacted by agency closures.

As the coronavirus public health crisis has continued into the third year, it has proved an insurmountable strain on all EMS agencies. In recognition of the great need for emergency services in rural areas, and the critical role EMS personnel serve across the country, in FY 2020 and 2021, SAMHSA awarded REMSTEA grants ranging from \$92,000 to \$200,00 to approximately 27 EMS agencies in multiple states for recruitment and training purposes. In FY 2022, SAMHSA awarded 40 grants for a total of \$7.1 million to rural EMS agencies almost double the previous two years clearly demonstrating the need for the additional funding in FY 2023.

We were encouraged that the Senate Labor HHS Committee recognized the workforce crisis confronting EMS agencies in their FY 2023 bill:

“The Committee recognizes that our Nation is facing a crippling EMS workforce shortage which threatens public health and jeopardizes our ability to respond to healthcare emergencies on a timely basis. ASPR should prioritize ensuring a well-trained and adequate ground ambulance services workforce in underserved, rural, and Tribal areas and/or addressing health disparities related to accessing prehospital ground ambulance healthcare services, including critical care transport.”

We stand ready to work with your Subcommittee and ASPR to address this most urgent EMS workforce need.

In closing, we respectfully request \$15 million for SIREN/REMSTEA grants in the final FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor HHS) bill to provide much needed grants to already strained rural EMS agencies working to provide life-saving medical care to critically ill and injured patients in their communities.

We stand by to provide additional context or information where it may be helpful.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'B.E.' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Bruce Evans, MPA, CFO, NRP, SPO
President, NAEMT

CC: Chair Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby and Ranking Member Granger

Enclosures: 2 EMT workforce shortage articles [here](#) and [here](#).