

KANSAS EMS ASSOCIATION

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Unity Is Strength

To: Special Committee on Organization of Public Health Boards

From: Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA)

RE: Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services

Date: December 12, 2016

The Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA) is the professional association representing the paramedics, EMTs and ambulance services serving the citizens of Kansas. KEMSA works on various regulatory and legislative matters as well as conferences and educational programs.

KEMSA was represented at the recent hearing held on 12-6 at the state capitol. We have considered general comments presented in the state consulting report and discussed the conceptual proposal with other stakeholder groups.

KEMSA respects the serious challenges presented by the Kansas budget but we do not think that the proposal as is currently outlined will demonstrate any substantial savings and more importantly it will create additional challenges for the provision of quality Emergency Medical Services in Kansas.

Unlike many health care programs citizens have little choice regarding which ambulance service will provide them service during a time of crisis. Each city/county in Kansas has its own ambulance service which responds to emergencies. The consumer has no choice in the matter and must rely on the local agency to provide high quality services. A person can typically change doctors or go to a different barber but during a time of crisis the local ambulance service must be a viable entity as there is no ability to request another option in a timely manner. The state must have a heightened sense of responsibility to assure that each ambulance service is properly equipped, personnel are assigned, the staff are well trained, the physician medical director is providing proper oversight etc.

Inadequate state oversight will mean a degradation of the services provided and a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of Kansans and the visitors to our state.

Due to this situation, it is critical that the state of Kansas provide the correct personnel to inspect ambulances, review training programs, review license issues, conduct investigations etc. Typically, the EMS staff conducting the ambulance inspections also engage with issues regarding the ambulance service's clinical protocols, personnel licensure questions and training requirements. The Kansas Board of EMS staff deal with service issues, inspection issues, clinical


issues because of the very fact they are all EMS personnel with years of experience; a general state employee with no EMS background will be poorly considered by the EMT's and paramedics in the state and will flounder.

Creating a work pool of personnel who have no background in EMS, and expect them to engage in the specific issues with EMS agencies will lead to degradation to the quality of services provided, especially with regard to smaller and more rural agencies. Larger services have the benefit of specialized staff to assist with communicable disease issues, testing, education, etc. The smaller services often look to the Kansas Board of EMS for guidance, because of the EMS background of the staff.

To utilize general function state employees with no EMS background to conduct any of the front-line functions of inspecting, investigations, training, etc. is not in the best interest of the citizens of Kansas.

KEMSA appreciates the willingness of the committee to consider our thoughts on the issue, and we are certainly willing to remain engaged as this topic is further considered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon Beck". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Brandon Beck
President
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