



## RILEY COUNTY

---

Emergency Medical Service  
2011 Claflin Road  
Manhattan, KS 66502

### Proponent Testimony on SB 491

Senate Commerce Committee

David Adams, EMS Director

Madame Chair and Committee Members,

I'm David Adams, Director at Riley County EMS and the Vice President of the Kansas EMS Association, and this letter is my support for Senate Bill 491.

Provider mental health is a topic that every First Response agency must address and support now. In prior years, First Responders were left to help each other process the effects of what they saw, what they heard, what they felt, and what they smelled when on the job. I have witnessed firsthand way too many first responders determine that they could only process the detrimental effects on their mental health from work related emotional trauma by abusing alcohol, drugs, and those that they loved. Mental health crises such as these have ended careers, torn families apart, and has led to the premature death of far too many heroes of our communities. We are asking you to help us.

Riley County EMS has taken very bold steps to assist our staff members' mental health by utilizing three programs. We have an employee led Peer Support team where our staff can reach out to talk to each other. We have a team pastor who is a former Paramedic and so he understands what our employees are dealing with, but his ability to help is limited, and we have the Counties Employee Assistance Program. It is continually proven that EAP programs fall short in their approach as the mental health professionals employed typically aren't trained for the specific issues that First Responders must process.

While these programs are a step in the right direction, they fall very short in helping our staff deal with the side effects of their jobs. We need more help. We need the support and assistance that the PTSD bill that is in front of you provides.

Thank you for reading my testimony and giving us the opportunity to present before you.

Regards,

David Adams