



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

April 3, 2020

Secretary – designee Andrea Palm
Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Secretary – designee Palm,

Thank you for your hard work to keep Wisconsinites safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

An important aspect of the state's continued COVID-19 response is the sustained availability of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel to staff local EMS departments. During this unprecedented crisis, EMS departments must be available 24/7 to not only assist those with COVID-19, but to also continue to serve their communities daily.

Many EMS departments, especially those in rural areas, rely fully on volunteers. Even under the best of circumstances, many of these departments are struggling to find volunteers. The COVID-19 pandemic has only increased the strain placed on these rural, volunteer departments.

We have consistently fought to help our rural EMS units find and keep volunteers and the COVID-19 pandemic does not change that end.

In light of the current public health emergency, we urge you to closely examine the Department of Health Services (DHS) Administrative Code 110 and do whatever you can to ease the regulatory burden on our EMS personnel during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Recently, the Wisconsin EMS Association sent a [letter](#) to Mark Lockhart, EMS Section Chief, requesting that DHS take various administrative actions to support Wisconsin's EMS departments. While we understand that DHS is not able to fulfill all of these requests without legislative action, we urge you to take these suggestions under consideration and do what you can to provide relief to EMS departments around the state.

For example, **DHS is able to temporarily suspend the ambulance staffing requirements that outline what is necessary to form a legal ambulance crew.** We have heard that many EMS departments, especially those in rural areas, are having trouble finding enough volunteers to form a legal ambulance crew, even under the best of circumstances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a CPR-certified driver should be allowed to assume the position of an ambulance driver for rural EMS services.

In addition, **DHS can make it easier for EMS personnel to work in departments across the state by temporarily easing or suspending the credentialing requirements.** As some areas of the state are going to be more impacted than others during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring easy credentialing across departments is key to keeping our EMS departments fully staffed.

Finally, EMS licenses in Wisconsin expire on June 30, 2020. In order to receive licensure renewal, all EMS personnel must complete continuing education requirements. **DHS can temporarily suspend the continuing education requirements for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMTs), and Paramedics and we request that you do so.** This change will allow EMS practitioners to help with the COVID-19 pandemic without worrying about completing continuing education requirements for the duration of the public health emergency.

These examples are certainly only the beginning of how DHS can help Wisconsin's EMS departments during the COVID-19 pandemic. We implore DHS to do a thorough examination of DHS 110 and publish an order that will directly benefit our EMS personnel.

While these changes will not solve the continued volunteer shortage overnight, they will provide much needed relief to EMS departments around the state during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your support of EMS in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,



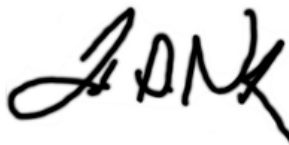
Senator Howard Marklein
17th Senate District



Representative Tony Kurtz
50th Assembly District



Representative Travis Tranel
49th Assembly District



Representative Todd Novak
51st Assembly District

cc:

Governor Tony Evers
Mark Lockhart – WI DHS EMS Section Chief