

Testimony: Community Paramedic Study  
Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4002  
Health Services Committee  
Wednesday, July 30, 2014; 2:30 p.m.

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Sherm Syverson. I am the Executive Director of F-M Ambulance Service in Fargo. I am here today in support of the community paramedic initiative in North Dakota and to deliver a status report on Fargo's community paramedic pilot project that was approved by the North Dakota Department of Health's Division of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma.

The Fargo project is being supported by Sanford Health, Fargo-Cass Public Health, Southeast Human Service Center and F-M Ambulance Service. To date, five veteran paramedics have completed the didactic portion of community paramedic training and are now participating in targeted clinical internships including: behavioral health, social work, case management, emergency medicine, medical detox, chronic illness management, and public health.

Once these clinical requirements are met, community paramedics will be scheduled based on historical data correlated with high frequency users (HFU's) of emergency medical services (EMS). We anticipate a limited deployment of community paramedics to begin September 2014.

Goals of F-M Ambulance Service's Community Paramedic Pilot Project include:

1. Identify baseline data metrics for comparison following project completion.
2. Establish community paramedic protocols, policies and procedures.
3. Improve access to appropriate levels of healthcare among HFU's.
4. Reduce amount of unnecessary emergency department visits and ambulance trips by HFU's.
5. Improve the health and well-being of HFU's.
6. Reduce the number of readmissions to emergency departments and hospitals.
7. Assess data metrics and present results to ND DOH, DEMST and Health Services Committee.
8. Identify best practices for community paramedic programs in North Dakota.
9. Investigate reimbursement models, support the development of rules and regulations, and engage stakeholders to insure long-term sustainability of community paramedic programs.
10. Explore and develop an educational model for community paramedic training within North Dakota based on findings from all pilot projects.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity you've given me to share today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.