



February 2, 2024

Re: Support for House Bill 4081 – Oregon Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Modernization

Dear Chair Nosse and Members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care:

The Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners strongly support House Bill 4081 to reorganize the State EMS Governance Structure which will eventually lead to more timely and efficient delivery of emergency medical services to our residents. Key components of this bill include creating an Oregon EMS Advisory Board, establishing an EMS data system, creating uniform standards and objectives, as well as uniform EMS staffing across Oregon.

Deschutes County has worked closely with its Ambulance Service Area (ASA) committee and has heard of the workforce struggles and ambulance shortages that especially impact rural areas. The transport time from Rural La Pine to St. Charles Hospital in Bend is approximately 45 minutes, meaning that at least one ambulance will be out of service for over 90 minutes whenever an emergency transport is made. Rural EMS programs also have the problem of recruiting and retaining staff, which compounds their already long transport commutes.

Further, modernization of the Public Health System in Oregon has created many improvements in staff capacity and quality service delivery which would not have occurred without regular commitments of support from the Legislature. Similarly, EMS Modernization is a long term commitment to increase capacity, infrastructure, and employing best practices that lead to a stronger, more organized EMS workforce and improved service delivery.

We strongly urge you support House Bill 4081 to protect the lives and health outcomes of Oregonians! Thank you for your consideration,

The Deschutes County Board of Commissioners

Patti Adair
Chair

Anthony DeBone
Vice Chair

Phil Chang
Commissioner

CC: Senators Lynn Findley, Tim Knopp, and Dennis Linthicum
Representatives Vikki Breese Iverson, Jason Kropf, Emerson Levy, and E. Werner Reschke