

I am writing to strongly support HB 4081, the Emergency Medical Services Modernization Act of 2024. As a practicing emergency physician at OHSU, and one of many stakeholders invested in providing timely, equitable access to care for all Oregonians, I know that this bill is crucial to addressing the shortcomings within Oregon's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system

Oregon's current EMS system is inadequate to address the needs of Oregon's diverse population. In 2008, the American College of Emergency Physicians issued a report on EMS in the US and assigned Oregon a disappointing "D" grade, placing Oregon 47th in the country for providing high-quality EMS.

Twelve years ago I chaired a multidisciplinary committee to study our EMS system and provide recommendations to the legislature. These recommendations, based on the success of the Oregon Trauma system, form the basis for HB 4801. Unfortunately, our efforts to date have not resulted in action by the Oregon Legislature.

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the existing strain on our EMS system, but it also spurred innovation and adaptation out of necessity, showing the ways regional coordination of care can improve prehospital treatment and patient transfer efficiencies. Now is the time to build upon these innovations and ensure that Oregon's EMS system evolves to deliver high-quality care to all Oregon residents.

If enacted, HB 4081 would establish the State Emergency Medical Services Program, providing centralized support for EMS services statewide. Second, it would convert existing Area Trauma Regions into Emergency Medical Services Regions, allowing more time-sensitive emergency networks to adopt the regional care structure of one of the bright spots in Oregon emergency medicine, our trauma system.

Data collected as the system evolves will form a basis for innovation and system improvement.

By championing this important piece of legislation, we can raise the standard for life-saving EMS services for all Oregonians.

I urge your support for this critical proposal. Together, we can work toward a more efficient, equitable, and responsive EMS system for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

John Moorhead MS MD FACEP