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March 11, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), representing our nation's Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) thank you for your ongoing support of the EMS workforce. The Rural EMS Equipment and Training Assistance (REMSTEA) grants provide critical services to their patients and communities nationwide, especially in the most rural parts of our country.

The COVID-19 public health emergency has reinforced the great need for increased federal support for EMS in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill for SIREN grants. Also known as the Rural EMS Equipment and Training Assistance (REMSTEA) program, within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), these funds are focused on ensuring rural areas have access to the EMS essential to every community. We write to ask the Committee to provide **\$20 million in funding for the SIREN Grant Program**. This grant program is supported by a multitude of national EMS and Fire organizations.

The additional burdens placed on EMS systems and personnel during this public health emergency have been challenging, even for the strongest systems. Across the country, in large urban areas as well as small rural communities, Paramedics and EMTs have been serving on the frontlines of our nation's war against the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the lack of federal investment in our nation's EMS system has always been a challenge, the pandemic exacerbated the challenge so much so that many EMS systems in our country are at the breaking point. Rural systems, struggling before the pandemic, are in most need. Most communities are facing crisis-level shortages of EMS personnel and many communities have been impacted by agency closures.

As the coronavirus public health crisis has continued into the third year, it has proved an insurmountable strain on all EMS agencies. In recognition of the great need for emergency services in rural areas, and the critical role EMS personnel serve across the country, in FY 2020 and 2021, SAMHSA awarded REMSTEAs ranging from \$92,000 to \$200,00 to approximately 27 EMS agencies in multiple states for recruitment and training purposes. In December 2021, SAMHSA announced plans to award another 27 rural EMS applicants for 2022.

We respectfully request \$20 million for SIREN/REMSTEAs in the FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services bill to provide much needed grants to already strained rural EMS agencies working to provide life-saving medical care to critically ill and injured patients in their communities.

We stand by to provide additional context or information where it may be helpful.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce Evans, MPA, CFO, NRP, SPO
President, NAEMT