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March 3, 2025

The Honorable Dick Durbin
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

On behalf of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT), I am respectfully requesting your support to include \$33 million in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill for the Rural EMS Training and Equipment Assistance (REMSTEAs) grant program, also known as SIREN grant program.

Formed in 1975 and over 90,000 members strong, the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) is the only national association representing the professional interests of paramedics, advanced emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical responders and other professionals providing prehospital and out-of-hospital emergent, urgent or preventive medical care. NAEMT members work in all sectors of EMS, including government service agencies, fire departments, hospital-based ambulance services, private companies, industrial and special operations settings, and in the military. They also work in hospitals, clinics and other healthcare settings.

In the wake of exponential increases in expenses for medical supplies, equipment, fuel, and medications, even the most well-resourced EMS agencies and fire departments across the United States are struggling to stretch their budgets to maintain their operations. Many are also facing crisis-level challenges in recruiting and retaining personnel, fueled in part by low unemployment and an incredibly competitive labor market.

Coupled with declines in primary care and hospital service availability, greater distances between healthcare facilities, low reimbursement rates, and the ongoing opioid and fentanyl crisis, these circumstances have created a perfect storm of financial challenges for rural EMS agencies.

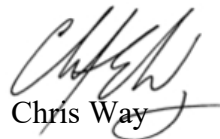
The need has never been greater for the SIREN grant program. These funds are administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and are focused on ensuring rural areas have access to the EMS services essential to every community. This grant program is supported by a multitude of national EMS and Fire organizations.

Since the inception of the program in 2018, 170 awards ranging from \$92,000 to \$200,000 have been made to rural communities. The funds have been used to maintain, improve, or expand the level of emergency medical care provided to the residents of those communities.

Again, we respectfully request \$33 million for SIREN/REMSTEA grants in the FY2026 LHHS bill to provide much-needed resources to already strained rural EMS agencies working to provide life-saving medical care to critically ill and injured patients in their communities.

Thank you for your strong support. We are standing by to provide any additional information or assistance you may need.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Way", written over the printed name.

Chris Way
President, NAEMT