



February 22, 2021

Dear Members of the House Health Finance and Policy Committee;

On behalf of the Minnesota Ambulance Association (MAA), I write in opposition to the proposed future changes of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) in Minnesota. The MAA is a non-profit, member-based organization representing ambulance services large and small and large hospital based NEMT providers in Minnesotans. Keeping true to our mission we believe access to Emergency Medical Services, including NEMT is vital to assuring a safety net for Minnesotans.

Across MN today and primarily in rural MN the reduction of NEMT services before Covid-19 was alarming. Ambulance services basically became the backstop for all NEMT work after 6:00 p.m. and most all weekends. Rates continued to stay stagnate as fuel and fixed cost crew for these providers. When NEMT is not available it ties up an Emergency Ambulance for those transports in a community, especially a rural community.

In the FY2022-23 Governor's Budget Recommendations, January 2021 Governor Walz also recommends moving to a uniform administration of NEMT services in the Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare programs. This has been attempted by BCBS of MN twice and DHS once with poor outcomes and dramatic impacts to transportation providers and most importantly clients needing the transportation. The pandemic has put these providers at a crossroads of closing without additional financial help. The Managed Care plans have stepped up and assisted with rates the last 8 months to keep NEMT viable, especially in rural MN.

The MAA feels strongly that removing Managed Care from providing NEMT services and eliminating the Competitive bid prohibition will only lead to severe through put and flow issues for large metro hospitals and reduce availability in rural MN. That in-turn will impact Ambulance providers and the Safety Net. This proposal is a drive to the bottom with capitated rates.

Thank you,

Bruce Hildebrandt
President of the MN Ambulance Association

