

Testimony of Brian Webb on 03 March 2023 in the AK House Labor and Commerce Committee:

“Chairman Sumner and members of the Labor & Commerce committee, my name is Brian Webb. I’m from Anchorage, and I represent myself, as a 45-year veteran Alaska EMS responder, and thank you for the opportunity to speak once more.”

As mentioned in my prior testimony, House Bill 57 seeks to correct EMS’s omission in AS 18.23, the original **Health Care Services Information and Review Organizations** statute.

While I previously spoke to the importance of the recruiting and the retaining of our vital EMS Medical directors, this proposed legislation also is an EMS system-wide request. This further seeks to provide the protections to our individual EMS services and the fire departments who engage in EMS quality assurance programs, that our fixed healthcare facilities enjoy. But most importantly, this seeks to protect our individual EMS responders, especially our many volunteers in Alaska.

Speaking as one of these credentialed responders, I can relate how uncomfortable it is to attend required quarterly EMS run review meetings chaired by the EMS medical director, knowing that what I say or what is discussed amongst the service personnel present, does not receive the same protections afforded to the hospital or clinical “review organizations” in statute.

Unlike the fixed facility review committees, EMS QA committees not only review our patient care activities, but our medical directors and training officers often openly challenge us to defend our care given. This isn’t about disagreeing with our care or questioning our competency. It’s about furthering our education and our development as providers in the field. This is a must-do process in order for our next generation of providers to be the best patient care advocate, when they transition care to others.

It’s essential that EMS providers have the confidence to articulate our actions to higher levels of care, as well as to stimulate critical thinking skills required of prehospital care providers. Our system of quality assurance committees provides that avenue. However, those outside of our system, often may not understand what is being accomplished during the run reviews, then in litigation, our own QA process is being used against us. Yet, once more, the hospitals and clinics are all shielded from any discovery and subpoena in the statute.

Alaska EMS is just asking for the legislature to provide a level of equity in the statute for EMS. Please help us provide this fix, that other states, such as New York, Florida, California, Arizona, Washington, and others, have already done for their EMS systems.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Labor & Commerce Committee, thank you for the consideration of our proposed EMS legislation. That completes my testimony, and I’ll remain on the line should you have any questions or comments. And thank you again for supporting Alaska EMS.