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SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	<u>3</u>
DATE:	<u>2-18-05</u>
<u>DR. JIM UPCHURCH</u>	
<u>SB 448</u>	

**SB 448 Testimony**

Given by James Upchurch, M.D. **DR. JIM UPCHURCH**  
Montana Board of Medical **SB 448** Examiners  
Montana Department of Labor and Industry

Chairman Cromley and members of the committee

My name is Jim Upchurch a Montana licensed physician and EMT Paramedic practicing in Crow Agency, Montana since 1985.

I am a member of the Montana Board of Medical Examiners, a practicing physician, the medical director for several EMS services and a licensed and functioning EMT paramedic with our local EMS service.

It is my pleasure today to testify on the behalf of the Montana Board of Medical Examiners concerning SB448, revision of the EMT licensing statute. This bill is about public safety.

Currently, licensed emergency medical personnel (EMTs) are working in many of the emergency rooms across Montana as unlicensed medical personnel because the current law identifies their role as out-of-hospital. Yet the same skills they are licensed to provide to you and your family at an accident on the side of the road or in your home late at night, cannot be provided within the doors of the emergency department; so they function in the emergency room unlicensed. The Montana Board of Medical Examiners feels that the legislators who originally drafted and passed this legislation did not intend for this to occur; they clearly understood the value and safety to the public when health care providers are licensed and accountable. SB 448 provides public safety by identifying that when EMTs work within the emergency department they do so under the same rules and regulations as they do when in the field. Licensure at all levels assures that medical personal are properly educated, trained, skilled and accountable to the public for their actions, these EMTs should be held to no less of a standard when caring for you or your loved ones in the emergency room.

Additionally, this statutory change would increase the availability of licensed and qualified staffing for rural and frontier communities that are suffering from the difficulty of staffing emergency rooms in critical access hospitals. 5,052 EMTs are currently licensed and distributed throughout the state; this work force could provide an excellent addition to the already functioning health care providers struggling to meet the needs of their communities. This bill is not intended to replace the current healthcare providers. The EMTs bring a unique skill set to the medical teams already providing care to you, and your loved ones.

The Montana Board of Medical Examiners encourages you to support this legislation and help assure quality patient care to the citizens of Montana.

Thank you for allowing me to address the committee and if you have any questions, I'd be happy to address them.

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*Dr*

# Fact Sheet

## Emergency Medical Technicians

**The EMT is a skilled professional** who utilizes a comprehensive assessment to determine a course of action and intervention when faced with a life threatening situation in a variety of environments. They perform many skilled medical tasks including but not limited to cardiopulmonary resuscitations, cardiac monitoring, defibrillation, endotracheal intubation, the utilization of backboards and splinting devices to secure unstable fractures involving the head, neck and spine, initiating and monitoring IV's and delivering life saving medications.

**There are four levels of EMTs.** (EMT-First Responder, EMT-Basic, EMT-Intermediate and EMT-Paramedic).

**The Montana Board of Medical Examiners is responsible for licensing EMTs.**

**Standards for licensure include;** successful completion of a board approved national standard educational program, successful completion of national examination, and national registration.

The Board of Medical Examiners has adopted detailed rules governing the profession following national standards as identified in the EMS Agenda for the Future, and Education Agenda for the Future: A Systems Approach, and the National EMS Education and Practice Blueprint.