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SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 6

DATE: 2-18-05

BILL NO. SB 448

Testimony in Support of SB 448

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The death and suffering of Montanans who are victims of accidents and sudden illness is a tragedy. Responding to this tragedy, at any time and any place, are EMTs who have spent hundreds of hours, and in many cases their own money, to become trained and to maintain their training. Most are volunteers – leading two lives – one to make a living like all of us; another to drop everything to help their community, friends and families with a medical crisis.

Through deliberations with our EMS System Task Force, the EMS Services we license and many health care facilities we work with, support for EMTs in emergency rooms has been expressed many times. Most facilities have very limited resources and EMTs have long been recognized as part of a team of professionals to provide safe, quality patient care.

If enacted, this legislation seeks to remedy the following issues:

1. **It formally expands the setting in which EMTs practice into an emergency room.** In 1975, the legislature found and declared that prompt and efficient emergency medical care of the sick and injured at the scene and during transport to a health care facility was important for the reduction of mortality and morbidity. In the past 30 years, it's become obvious that EMTs don't stop at the ER door. Current law acknowledges that at 3:00 a.m. in the morning, an EMT is an EMT when he or she responds to treat sick and injured patients. An EMT is an EMT when he or she continues to treat those patients on the way to a hospital. But, as that EMT walks through the doors of an emergency room, current law isn't clear about the EMT's licensure. Most emergency rooms have limited resources

and SB 448 allows EMTs to be one of those resources and to provide care safely under their license.

2. **Secondly, extending their license into the emergency room also extends their medical oversight to be within the emergency room.** Under current law, the Board of Medical Examiners and physicians provide oversight and medical control to EMTs in the prehospital arena. SB 448 extends that same oversight and medical control into the emergency room.

Our EMT law of 30 years ago contemplated that EMTs would bring their patients to the doors of an emergency room and just hand them over to someone else. Today, EMTs are recognized as critical members of a team of medical professionals who provide patient care. This legislation protects the public safety by allowing EMTs to function in an emergency room under their license. We stand in support of SB 448 and would appreciate your support also. Thank you.