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February 18, 2005

To: Senate Public Health Committee

Fr: Harry Bold, CEO

Re: Support of SB 448

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	<u>8</u>
DATE:	<u>2-18-05</u>
BILL NO.	<u>SB 448</u>

Please consider this a request to give favorable consideration to SB 448 that will allow EMTs to work in emergency rooms in Montana's hospitals. This is a very important piece of legislation for small rural hospitals that often times need the extra help EMTs can provide during critical emergency situations.

As we all know, rural Montana basically operates with volunteer EMTs who provide the first medical assistance and stabilization to patients. The EMT's training and skills have saved numerous lives throughout Montana. When these same EMTs present the patients to the hospital's emergency room it is important that they provide the needed and necessary information to doctors and nurses so that proper care can be provided based on all the facts available.

In the same manner our hospital believes that EMTs can and should be utilized even more in hospital emergency room situations to assist staff in providing needed care. The EMTs could be trained on each hospital's protocols and thus provide services that are so needed by busy doctors and nurses.

Our hospital emergency departments are seeing more and more patients each year. Yet the supply of nurses and doctors to take care of these people is still limited. By allowing EMTs to provide basic care and do much of the needed paper work, doctors and nurses would be freed up to utilize their skills in more critical areas. With proper training provided by each hospital, EMTs could be vital sources of "extra hands" that are often so very needed.

In closing I ask that you give this bill favorable consideration. Don't let the "scare tactics" of certain lobbyist groups influence your decision. This bill, when passed, offers so much potential to help patients receive quicker and continued quality care in our hospital emergency rooms.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.