

## Senate Bill NO. 448

Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee members: Chairman, Brett Cromley; John Cobb; John Esp; Duane Grimes; Lynda Moss; Jerry O'Neill; Trudi Schmidt; Dan Weinberg; and Carol Williams.

Dear Chairman Cromley,

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	#16
DATE:	2-18-05
BILL NO.	SB 448

I have been a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician since 1984. I was one of the first EMT-D's, (Emergency Medical Technician-Defibrillator), in the state of Montana as well as one of the first EMT-I's, (Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate), in this state. I entered into Montana State University's Nursing program in 1986 and graduated with a Baccalaureate degree in Nursing in 1990. In 1992, I challenged the National Paramedic Exam after filling out an extensive list of qualification criteria required by the state of Montana listing all the skills and where I learned them in my previous EMT training or nursing training, and became certified as a National Registered Paramedic. I'm currently employed as a Flight Nurse in a level II trauma center and have board certifications as an Emergency Room Nurse, as well as in Flight Nursing. I have extensive field experience as well as Emergency Room experience.

I feel compelled professionally and personally to oppose this Bill that has been introduced by Mr. Black, due to the fact that EMT's do not possess the same knowledge base that a nurse has to properly and safely care for patients in an in-patient setting. A paramedic, which is the highest level of an EMT, has approx 2000 hours of didactic and clinical experience combined as compared to a Registered Nurse, such as myself, with four years of didactic and clinical experience. The training that a paramedic possesses has a vastly different focus as compared to a nurse. An EMT is trained to quickly assess for Life Threatening Emergencies then attempt to correct them by a set of standardized protocols approved by the state of Montana and an off line medical director. The patient is then transported to the nearest appropriate medical facility as safely as possible. An EMT's training is focused and protocol driven and lacks any evidence research based practice or theory. Nursing encompasses a holistic approach to care with its practice based in theory and research. Nursing is not limited to emergent care, but also employs a comprehensive list of medical, psychological, as well as community and family health-care.

The lack of professional health care providers in our state has deeper and more profound meanings. Montana has one of the lowest pay scales for nurses in The United States. This Bill proposes to correct the lack of professional health care providers by employing EMT's that could be supplemented at a lower pay scale, then trained and supervised by a Registered Nurse. This "knee-jerk" response or "band-aid approach" to our failing health care does nothing to address the real problem. In fact, it will increase our already burdened health care problem by increasing liability and malpractice insurances, thus increasing health care costs to the consumer.

In summary, I believe the residents of our great state deserve the highest quality and the safest delivery of in-patient health care available. Professional nurses who are dedicated in providing holistic, evidenced based care to our urban and rural residents can only accomplish this.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

*John Dea RN*

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