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TO: Chairwoman Carolyn McGinn
Senate Local Government Committee Members

FROM: Amy L. Lange, City Manager, Concordia

DATE: January 30, 2024

RE: Written Only - Testimony in Support of SB 384 – Ambulance Attendants

Chairwoman McGinn and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 384 on behalf of the City of Concordia.

Concordia is very fortunate to provide full-time Fire/EMS services to our community, and to have a local full service critical access hospital with 14 inpatient beds and an active emergency department. An affiliation between the North Central Kansas Medical Center and Salina Regional Health Center provides an opportunity to provide our patients appropriate care in the setting that best meets their healthcare needs. Our family, friends, and neighbors rely on and expect patient-centered service and care, especially when they are paying the bill, either through their property tax support of EMS or health insurance deductibles and co-pays for EMS and hospital services.

There are times when it is in the best interest of the patient to receive care at a higher acuity hospital, requiring transfer of the patient from NCK Medical Center in Concordia to a hospital in another community by ambulance. Current law requires one ambulance attendant to be a medically credentialed ambulance attendant. However, the Kansas Board of EMS regulations require two medically credentialed ambulance attendants. This more stringent regulation limits our ability to transfer patients to the appropriate level of care due to persistent staffing challenges experienced in our region.

In our rural community, we have the ability to provide only one driver and one care provider with the patient in the ambulance. The driver does not need to be a fully board-certified medical professional. They need to be a good driver, with proper training to operate an ambulance and certified in CPR and First Aid.

Our first priority is to respond to 911 calls locally. Our second priority is to provide interfacility patient transfers so our family, friends and neighbors receive the healthcare they need when they need it. Concordia Fire/EMS presently operates a 3-person shift, thereby requiring reserve or off-duty EMS staff to assist with patient transfers. These staff respond when they are able, but do need time to recharge after their 24-hour shift, or may not be able to leave their full-time jobs for a 3+ hour patient transfer. This means our patients must wait several hours for a transfer or incur the tremendous expense of a helicopter or fixed wing air ambulance transport, estimated at 10 times the cost of ground transport. If only the patient care provider in the back of the ambulance was required to be medically certified, our ambulance driver roster could increase through the use of volunteer firefighters or other City staff, thereby increasing the timeliness of appropriate patient care and keeping medical costs down for our family, friends and neighbors.

With this testimony in mind, the City of Concordia strongly urges you to support SB 384 to improve timely patient-centered medical care while helping to decrease healthcare costs. Thank you for consideration.

Amy L. Lange
City Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Lange".