

Matt Silvers

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21 MARCH 2023

My name is Matt Silvers and I am writing to express my opposition to Senate Bill 60. I have been a proud EMS provider at the EMT, EMT-Intermediate, and Paramedic levels since 2010, working in both rural and urban settings, as well as in transport and non-transporting roles.

As a current full time field paramedic, I work and feel the pressure of our staffing shortages everyday in the face of increasing call volume. The pressures of the pandemic created record attrition as our paramedics either transitioned to new, non-traditional paramedic roles created by the existing nursing shortage, or left the field of medicine entirely. My main concern is based on the aggressive weekly emails and calls I receive from EMS recruiters from across the nation. This indicates that every other state is facing the same issue therefore, educational requirements at that point are not the limiting factor to creating a sustainable paramedic workforce.

In my current role, I am fortunate to have a lot of interactions with new paramedics during the onboarding process. When I ask employees that have moved out of state of the factors that made them choose Oregon, they typically cite pay and advanced scope of practice as the two main drivers. Both of these factors are directly attributable to our high educational standards that are above the national level.

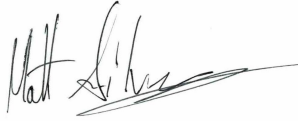
While I understand that the rural areas of our state are disproportionately affected by the paramedic shortage, we already have a unique class of provider (i.e., EMT-Intermediate) that was designed to allow access to ALS care in areas that cannot attract or retain paramedics. Licensing shortages are not a new topic to medicine; we have a physician shortage in Oregon. Would you ask to change the medical education standards for physicians? No, you would fill the physician shortages with physician assistants and nurse practitioners. Instead of lowering the educational bar to be a paramedic, we should be promoting and sponsoring funds to allow for more paramedic and EMT-Intermediate training.

Our role as EMS providers is becoming more and more complex. We have long passed the days of “load and go” or “you call, we haul”. We have expanded to fill the needs in community health, social work, critical care, mental health, tactical medicine, wilderness medicine, and home health. We should be pushing for more education, not less. If you or your family member were on the receiving end of care from an Oregon paramedic, would you want one who just met the national educational standards or one who exceeded them?

As I tell my paramedic interns, "You don't know what you don't know".

Thank you for your time and consideration in the matter.

Respectfully submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Silvers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Silvers, NRP, B.Sci. AAOT