



SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Emergency Medical Services Interim Committee

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June 30, 2025



Presentation Overview

- Overview of the Department of Health's EMS and Trauma Program
- Overview of the 2023 Regional Services Designation Ambulance System Study
- Workforce Challenges and Opportunities
 - Recruitment and Retention
 - Training of EMS employees and volunteers
- EMS Coverage Challenges
 - Trauma Deserts
 - Use of technology to treat patients
 - Intersection with tribal jurisdictions
- EMS Funding Models



OVERVIEW | Office of Rural Health and Emergency Services

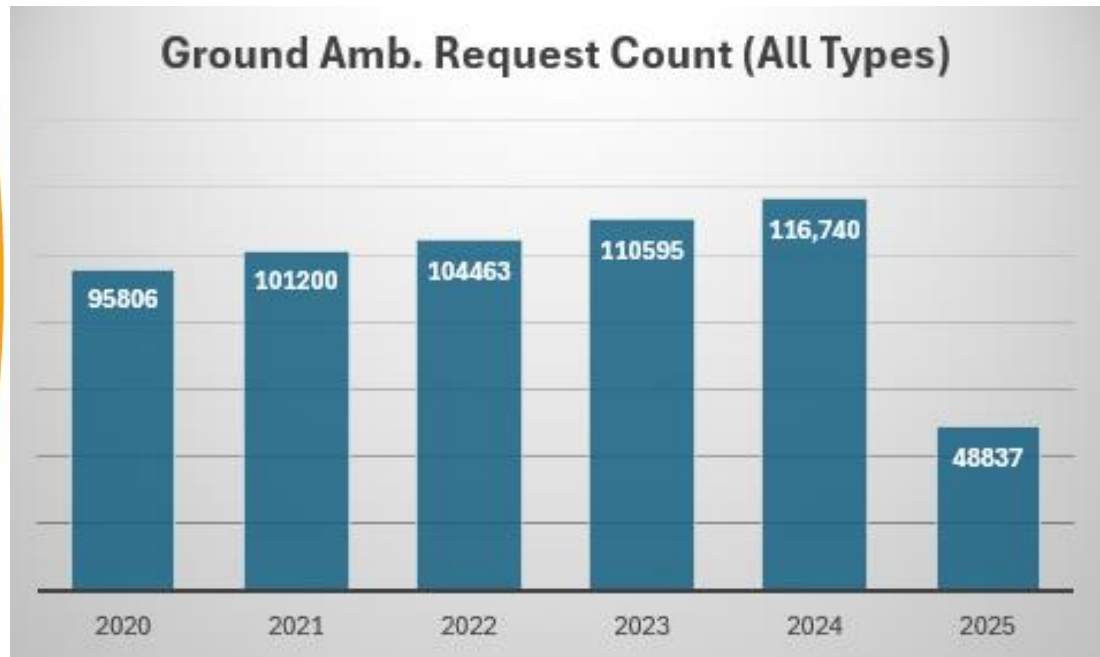
The EMS and Trauma Program is responsible for:

- Providing technical assistance to ambulance services
- Partnering with industry stakeholders
- Collecting and reporting EMS data
- Licensing ambulance services – 121 ground ambulance services
 - 28 – Volunteer (No Compensation)
 - 39 – Paid-On-Call or Paid Per Call
 - 24 – Combination
 - 30 – Full-Time or Part-Time Paid
- Administer and distribute Naloxone to first responders and more
- South Dakota has 49 trauma-designated hospitals. As an inclusive state, all hospitals are required to be designated at some level.

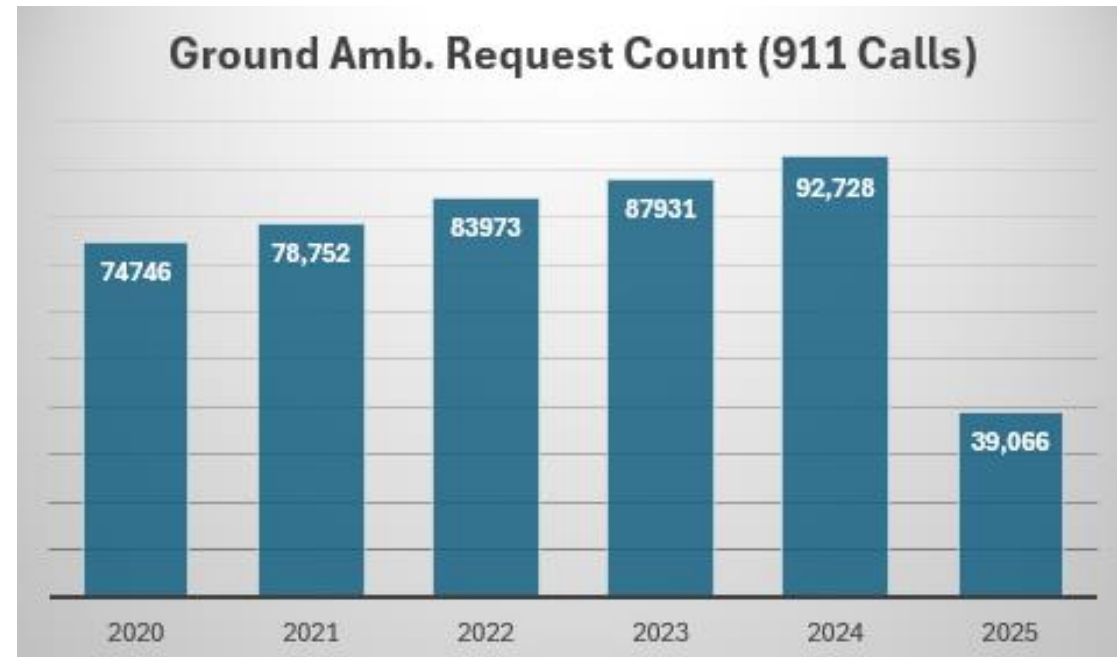


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Ground Amb. Request Count (All Types)

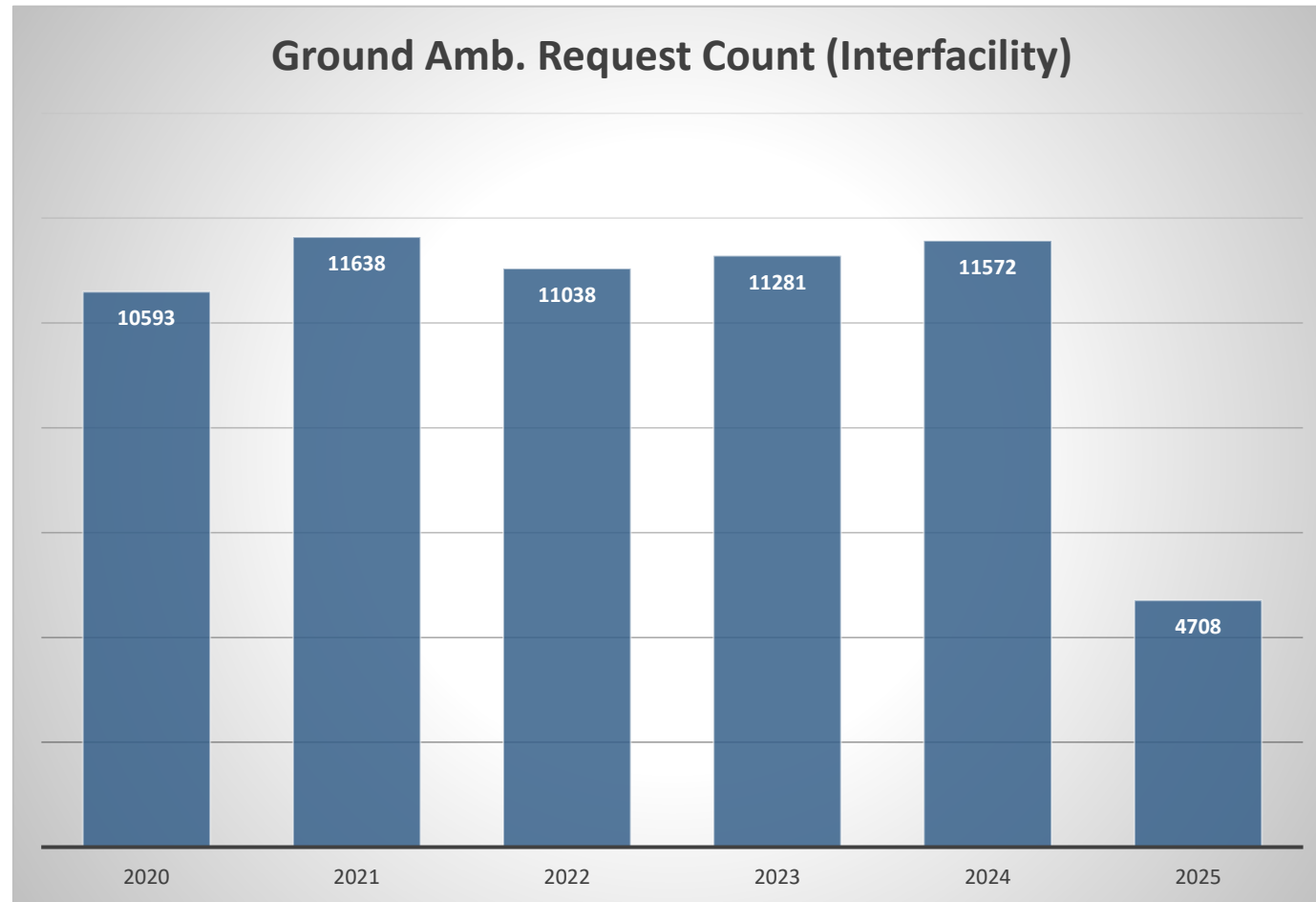


Ground Amb. Request Count (911 Calls)



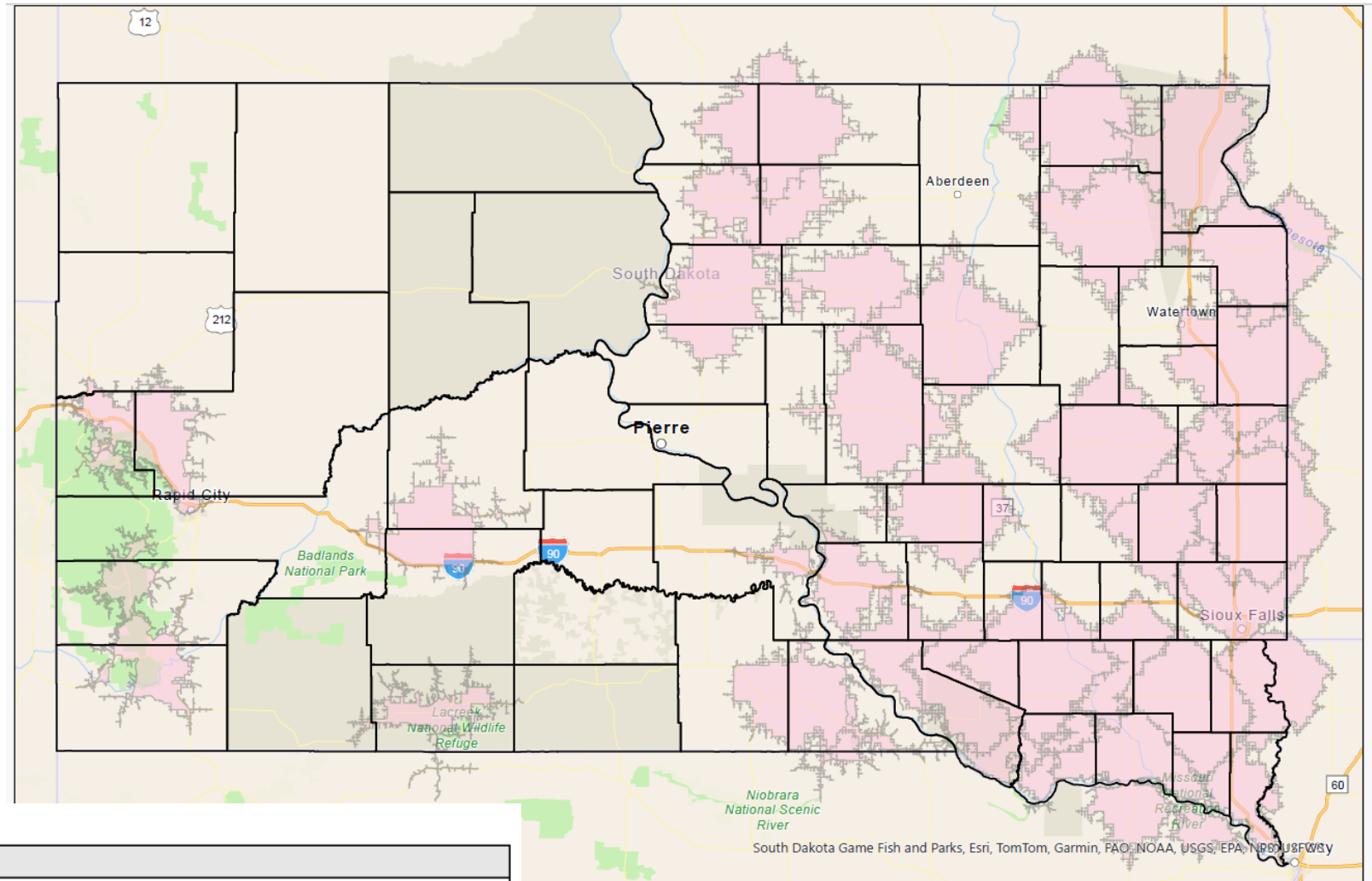


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Trauma Desert Information



PRE-HOSPITAL

EMS Scene Time > 20 Minutes

Definition	The time calculated between the time the unit transporting to your hospital arrived at the scene and the time the unit transporting to your hospital left the scene.
Exceptions	"Not Applicable" is used for patients who were not transported by EMS.
Data Source Guide	EMS Run Report



OVERVIEW | 2023 Regional Services Designation

Primary Goal

Create a pre-hospital system of care that ensures long-term sustainability.

- 1. Statewide Comprehensive assessment + Final Report**
- 2. Grant application and funding opportunity**



Regional Services Designation | Key Findings from Report

Workforce

- Recruitment and retention are the greatest challenges facing ambulance availability in South Dakota.
- Require mutual response with fire departments.
- Promote grants for services to purchase auto-loading gurneys to extend the working tenure of volunteers.
- Create possible legislation to incorporate CPR and other life-saving training for all South Dakota middle and high school students and offering college-level credits for high school students who complete emergency medical technician training.
- Improve test scores and passing rates for the National Registry of EMT Examination by offering more instruction and support to potential volunteers.



Regional Services Designation | Key Findings from Report

Short Term (less than 2 years)

- Unawareness of the EMS profession
- Minimal state on-site interaction
- Lack of report-writing skills
- Lack of continuous quality improvement and statewide metrics
- Lack of EMS medical director coordination

Medium Term (2-4 years)

- Inter-facility transports are delayed
- Lack of formal recruitment drives
- Not all dispatch centers use Emergency Medical Dispatching
- Students are not passing the National Registry of EMT Examination
- Lack of volunteers

Long Term (4 years or more)

- Patients transported unnecessarily



Regional Services Designation | Planning Grants

Things to Know:

- Competitive grant opportunity with each grant award limited to \$500,000 in funding.
- Applicants must be knowledgeable in the report findings + incorporate components into their grant application.
- Grant recipients must comply with state and federal grant guidance.
 - Furthermore, all grant recipients will be responsible for submitting monthly progress reports and invoices.
 - **Funds awarded must be spent by November 2026.**
- **Timeline** – Two grant periods were provided in 2024 - deadlines for those were March 15 and October 21 of 2024.



Regional Services Designation | Round 1 Outcomes

39 applicants | \$1.6 million

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Development of a quality assurance/improvement program
- Consultant services for struggling agencies
- EMT classes and training programs
- Regional training hub models and equipment
- Purchase of high-fidelity simulators



Regional Services Designation | Round 2 Outcomes


64 applicants | \$5.8 million

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Inter-facility transfer R&D
- EMS classes and online training
- Development of Local EMS Improvement Coalitions
- Consultant services:
 - Patient Care
 - Billing
 - Community development
- Power cots and Stair Chairs
- Tribal EMS assessments

Grant Recipient Testimonial

The EMS Regional Service Designation (RSD) grant has already made a powerful impact across South Dakota. Several communities have reached out with gratitude, thanking us for leading this important work and supporting the future of their local EMS systems. One community leader shared how excited he is to be a part of this effort, noting that the coalition offers valuable insights that can help improve and sustain his ambulance service.




Grant Recipient Success Stories to Date

Butte County Ambulance – Newell Ambulance has distributed a total of 54 first aid bags to local volunteer firefighters and law enforcement officers. These kits have already been used at four separate motor vehicle accident sites, allowing responders to administer basic care before ambulances arrived on scene.

Spink County Ambulance - Added two new EMTs and conducted an initial EMT training course with twenty participants. Of the seventeen individuals who passed the EMT psychomotor skills exam in March, twelve successfully passed the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) exam, resulting in a 70.6 percent pass rate.

Day County Ambulance - With the implementation of scheduling software, the team now has a clearer understanding of staffing gaps. The addition of power cots has also made it easier and safer to lift larger patients, reducing the risk of injury for EMS providers.




Grant Recipient Success Stories to Date

Sage Project - Two EMS services participating in the Patient Care EMS (PC-EMS) report high satisfaction, noting that the data supports better decision-making and improves communication with local municipalities and counties.

Mobridge Hospital - A Community Health Worker was hired in March and enrolled in the state's certification program. During her training, she became familiar with the grant project and integrated with the EMS team. She has since received training to serve as a backup EVOC driver and is helping identify patients who frequently use ambulance services. This allows the team to provide more consistent and cost-effective care.

Selby School - All students enrolled in the EMT course through Lake Area Technical College have completed the program. They have scheduled their NREMT exams and are expected to be fully certified by August 1.





Workforce Challenges

Number of Licensed BLS & ALS Providers (as of 06-13-2025)

Ambulance Operator (certification) = 1,966

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) = 107

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) = 2,012

Intermediate 85 (I/85) = 44

Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) = 109

Intermediate 99 (I/99) = 4

Paramedic = 860

Total Number of SD Licensed Providers (EMR – Paramedic) = 3,136

***Total # of Providers on Ground Ambulance Service's Personnel List = 1,983**



Workforce Challenges

Average Age per Provider Level (as of 06-13-2025)

Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) = 47 years

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) = 44 years

Intermediate 85 (I/85) = 61 years

Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) = 43 years

Intermediate 99 (I/99) = 67 years

Paramedic = 42 years

Overall average age = 51 years old

Of Note and Recognition:

There are 28 EMTs who are between 70-75 years old still active on their ambulance service.

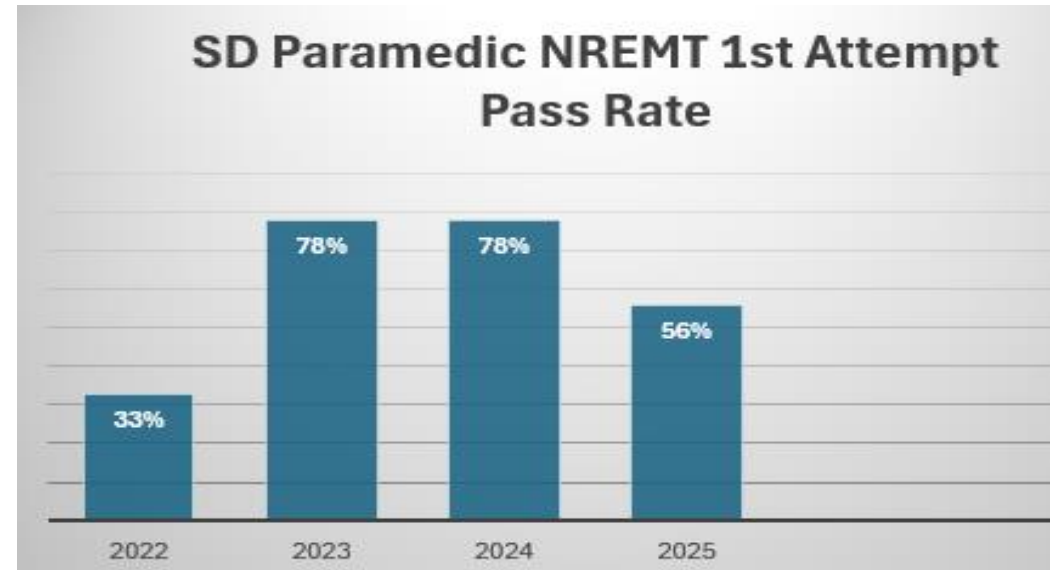
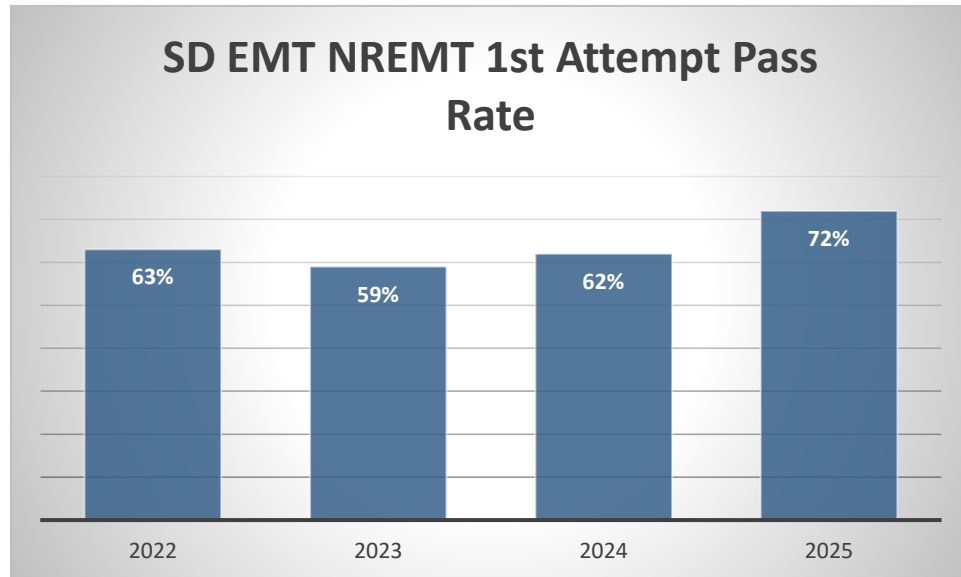
There are 9 EMTs who are between 76-79 years old still active on their ambulance service.

There are 2 EMTs who are between 80-82 years old still active on their ambulance service.



Workforce Challenge – Turned Opportunity for Success

National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) 1st Attempt Pass Rates





Training the Next Generation of the EMS Workforce

EMS 2.0:

- Mobile Integrated Health
- Community Paramedic
- Community Health Workers
- Integration of Paramedics in hospitals



Major Component of South Dakota Workforce

The Health Care industry is a major player on South Dakota's workforce stage, accounting for nearly 16% of all workers in privately owned establishments and more than 19% of those employers' payrolls.

On the Grow

South Dakota's Health Care industry added nearly 7,900 workers (15%) over the last 10 years, more than any other private industry.

Current Opportunities Abound

There are currently more than 3,500 South Dakota job openings in Health Care occupations.

The Future Looks Just as Bright

The Health Care industry is projected to be among the state's largest growth industries to 2032, adding nearly 8,000 workers to the state's economy with a growth rate exceeding 13%. Outstanding career opportunities await South Dakota's future Health Care workforce.



EMS Funding Models

- There is no silver bullet approach to funding EMS--EMS as an Essential Service
- SD Medicaid increased base rates
- RSD Findings
 - Staff funding, Medicaid funding, Grant funding for equipment and EMT classes
- Community stakeholder involvement--
- Alternative Funding options
 - Super speeder fee/vehicle registration fees



Tribal Highlights

- Pine Ridge and Eagle Butte
- Nearly \$345,000 in RSD awarded to our tribal partners
- Telemedicine in Motion
 - Rosebud, Lower Brule, Crow Creek, Eagle Butte, Pine Ridge, and Standing Rock
- LIFEPAK
 - Eagle Butte, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, Rosebud and Standing Rock



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