

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 203

Introduced by Dorn, 30.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to review how the State of Nebraska can ensure it has effective emergency medical services in rural communities.

Access to emergency medical care is vital to the health of rural communities across the United States. Emergency medical services play a critical role in this care for rural areas. Ambulance services face increasing difficulty in responding to emergencies in the rural United States due to workforce shortages and financial crises.

About a third of rural emergency medical services agencies in the United States are in immediate operational jeopardy because the agencies cannot cover costs, largely due to insufficient medicaid and medicare reimbursements. These reimbursements cover, on average, about one-third of the actual costs to maintain equipment, stock medications, and pay for insurance and other fixed expenses.

The study shall include, but need not be limited to:

(1) Exploring rural emergency medical services funding streams and researching potential new sources of funding;

(2) Exploring how to maintain and replace expensive ambulance and emergency medical equipment for rural emergency medical services;

(3) Exploring grants and funding opportunities to assist in training and certification costs for rural emergency medical services providers;

(4) Researching how other states with similar demographics to Nebraska fund rural emergency medical services;

(5) Exploring ways to grow and promote a workforce to help sustain rural emergency medical services;

(6) Examining ways to remove barriers for emergency medical technicians and paramedics in rural Nebraska and ensure they are working at the top of their scope; and

(7) Creating a comprehensive evaluation to understand the needs of rural Nebraska and emergency medical services regarding rural emergency medical care.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, FIRST SESSION:

1. That the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.