



Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs
1325 Winter St NE Suite 102 Minneapolis, MN 55413

August 20, 2021

Committee Members,

My name is Shane Hallow, I am the President of the Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs (HCAPE). HCAPE is the exclusive representative for the paramedics and dispatchers who are employed by Hennepin EMS. I am also a Hennepin EMS Paramedic and have been for the last 7 years.

As the state and world was shutting down in March of 2020, our members were holding the line in the streets of Hennepin County. In the face of an unprecedented global pandemic our members showed up to work putting their lives on the line to help others.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we were caring for patients in close proximity when widespread testing was not provided, and the available testing technology required a minimum of twenty-four hours for results. HCAPE members were caring for patients who oftentimes were unaware of had COVID or had symptoms but had not been tested. As infection rates and ICU patients continued to rise, our members never flinched, showing up day after to care for the sickest prehospital patients in Hennepin County.

These harrowing work conditions were compounded by inadequate personal protective equipment, for example plastic garbage bags to wear as droplet protection over our uniforms. We were told to reuse N95 masks over and over. If we needed a new N95 mask, we had to contact a supervisor to procure a replacement.

Many of our members contracted COVID-19 throughout the course of the pandemic. Some of these individuals are still dealing with long term side effects, many months after testing negative. Due to a large number of our members contracting COVID, our department had to switch to an emergency schedule that forced our entire staff to work ten hours of mandatory overtime to cover the gaps in our schedule.

In addition to the physical toll, a mental toll existed. Our members came to work every day not knowing if they were going to contract COVID-19 themselves or worse yet infect their family members and loved ones. Many of us were forced to avoid contact with loved ones or sleep in separate rooms or homes. Which resulted in our members sacrificing time with their families and loved ones caring for the citizens of Hennepin County.

We hope that the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group already has our members and all other first responders in mind when making their determination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Hallow', written in a cursive style.

Shane Hallow
President
Hennepin County Association of Paramedics and EMTs