

May 3, 2017

State of Ohio, Capitol Building
One Capitol, Square - Room 115
Columbus Ohio 43215

Federalism and Interstate Relations
RE: House Bill No. 79 – EMT Medical Professional Carry Bill

Chairperson Kristina Roegner,
Vice Chair Scott Lipps and
Ranking member David Leland

I learned of the work being done with House Bill 79 EMT Medical Profession Carry Bill and the intent to authorize licensed/certified paramedics in the State of Ohio to carry firearms when partnered with a State of Ohio sworn police officer. This bill is of specific interest to Colerain Township and the partnership of our police officers and paramedics.

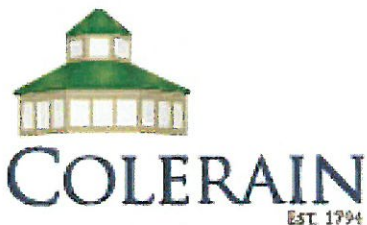
In 2015, the Colerain Township, Department of Public Safety initiated a proactive effort that partnered a sworn police officer and paramedic, trained to the level we refer to as “tactical medic.” This partnership of officer and medic allows for a proactive emergency response and required additional equipment (bulletproof vests) for our paramedics and enhanced training in areas such as self-defense tactics, ground fighting, chemical irritant training, and weapons familiarization for all of the authorized weapons carried by our police officers. A “logic model” was created to address a series of situations/circumstances in which we viewed this partnership as an appropriate response model.

The logic model for the partnership of tactical paramedic focused on a “proactive police and medic response” to reduce EMS response times, along with a “first emergency first” operating philosophy. We are astutely aware of the number of “active shooter” incidents across the country and within our region throughout the years, therefore driving the creation of this cooperative public safety response model. The model allowed our two public safety agencies to provide a more unique and timely life safety response to a shooting or other type of critical incident. We also are unique in our model because we provide proactive follow-up to heroin/opioid overdose incidents. This team’s response model for the heroin epidemic has become a template for many other agencies across the region and the state. In fact, our “Quick Response Team” or QRT team was the first unit on the scene of a “home invasion” shooting incident, while also the first unit on scene of a “double stabbing, double heroin overdose” incident. Each incident was handled with professionalism and the responsibilities of each public safety professional were handled appropriately, confirming this type of partnership can work. But, these two incidents also highlighted the increased risks associated with our tactical paramedics, serving alongside our police officers in such a close proximity to the “hot zone.”

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Trustees: Michael T. Inderhees, Gregory K. Insco, Jeffrey F. Ritter
Fiscal Officer: Heather E. Harlow
Administrator: Daniel P. Meloy





We prepared the necessary training, carrying and reporting policies associated with a "Response to Aggressive Behavior" incident, that required one of our medics to have to defend themselves or another, as it relates to defensive tactics using chemical irritant and the ground fighting or self-defense tactics. Should the bill pass and our tactical paramedics receive the authorization to train and certify to carry while working alongside our officers, it would not be difficult to include our paramedics in the annual retraining and recertification process utilized by our police officers is a natural progression of the partnership. Additionally, I advocate that the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy facilitate, create and support the initial and requalification requirements, while allowing local police agencies to provide annual recertification and requalification oversight.

In summary, I strongly support the language of House Bill 79. Allowing paramedics who work in partnership with police officers, serving their communities as part of a proactive public safety response team, or in service as a member of a special response or SWAT team deserve the authority to carry a firearm in the line of duty.

If additional information is desired, such as the policies and procedures, and/or the logic models delineating the partnership, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to support the safety of our paramedics working alongside our police officers.

Sincerely,

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C: State of Ohio Representative, Louis W. Blessing III, District 29

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