



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 8th, 2024

CONTACT: Sen. Jesse James
PHONE NUMBER: (608) 266-7511

Chippewa Valley Legislators Announce \$15 million for Emergency Departments

Madison – Republican legislators across the Chippewa Valley Friday morning introduced legislation that re-allocates \$15 million in previously unused funds to support emergency departments in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties. This move would ensure continued access to essential services in the wake of HSHS' departure.

“HSHS served over 22,000 patients between their two ER clinics in 2023,” Senator Jesse James (R-Altoona) said. “Our proposal addresses this immediate need while providing time for a longer-term solution to take shape.”

Back in the 2021-22 budget, the state approved \$15 million for HSHS to expand their psychiatric mental health bed capacity. Unfortunately, HSHS never came to claim those funds, and the money is still waiting to be dispersed. The plan is to repurpose those monies to a new grant program that would serve as a short-term bridge to continue emergency services until other providers can scale their capacity to meet the needs of the community.

“This has been a tremendous loss to our community. Over the past two weeks I have been having conversations with my constituents about what the next best steps are,” said Rep. Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer). “This proposal will help access of emergency department services in the Chippewa Valley and is a step in the right direction.”

“The closing of HSHS is a major catastrophe for the Chippewa Valley,” added Rep. Karen Hurd (R-Fall Creek). “Recovering will take all of us working together. The WI State Legislature stepping in to provide funding to help bridge the gap until a long-term solution is implemented and functioning is vital.”

“This closing negatively effects community members, hospital workers, and critical patients alike,” added Rep. Treig Pronschinske (R-Mondovi). “This legislation will be a strong step in the right direction. I am honored to be working alongside my colleagues in finding solutions to help our communities heal.”

Representative Warren Petryk (R-Town of Washington) said, “This proposal will help begin the healing process and provide immediate relief to those in the area who need access to emergency services,” with Rep. Dave Armstrong (R- Rice Lake) agreeing.

“I have had many conversations with community leaders and constituents on ways we can make sure our communities can receive healthcare,” said Rep. Moses (R-Menomonie). “This proposal will help make sure our residents are able to receive emergency health services as our communities look for ways to find long-term solutions.”



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882

“This proposal is an important first step in addressing the announced closures that will impact local health care services,” Senator Romaine Robert Quinn (R-Cameron) said. “We are seeking to make sure residents in Northwestern Wisconsin will continue to receive critical care services when they need it.”

The plan will require legislation to move through the committee process.

###