

**August 6th, 2025**

## **Letter to North Memorial Health Ambulance**

Dear Mr. Almendinger and Mr. Lee,

I am writing to strongly advocate for the return of **dedicated 24/7** ambulance coverage in Crosslake, as we previously had for many years. Mr. Lee, Chief Lohmiller and I have had several discussions about this issue dating back to March 2025. I'm reaching out now because we continue to see concerning delays in response times from North Memorial Ambulance.

Since 1996, the City of Crosslake has proudly partnered with North Memorial for ambulance services, paying \$1,000 per month to support what was once a strong, reliable, and appreciated presence in our community. That contract provided 2 trucks and 1 crew.

In 2012, the City of Crosslake invested \$179,670 to build a dedicated wing to house two ambulances, complete with sleeping quarters, a kitchen, an office, and storage for PPE and medications. This facility was specifically designed to support paramedics and ensure swift, local response to emergencies.

However, when North Memorial shifted to a roaming staffing model—patrolling Highway 371 and responding from various locations—the City chose to discontinue our contract, as the level of service no longer justified the investment.

Unfortunately, the impact of that change has become clear. Just earlier this summer, a medical emergency occurred just a stone's throw from the fire hall. The helicopter from Brainerd

arrived **five minutes before** the ambulance, which had a **24-minute response time**. Had we still had a dedicated crew stationed locally, this might have been a life-saving difference.

Currently, the **average** response time in Crosslake is around **25 minutes**, which is simply unacceptable. Some recent response times include:

- 36 minutes – 03/30/2024
- 25 minutes – 07/28/2024

- 42 minutes – 08/01/2024
- 42 minutes – 08/14/2025
- 40 minutes – 02/06/2025
- 42 minutes – 04/01/2025

Since North Memorial ended dedicated coverage in November 2023, we have had **10+ incidents** where faster response times could have led to significantly different outcomes. There are multiple Code 3 incidents in our area where having local, dedicated ambulance service would have made a measurable difference.

I respectfully urge you to **reconsider your current staffing model** and bring dedicated ambulance coverage back to Crosslake. We are more than willing to revisit a service agreement. The facility built in 2012 remains available and well-equipped. Crosslake is also geographically positioned to effectively serve neighboring communities such as Fifty Lakes, Ideal, and Mission.

Hopefully we can get back to having a dedicated crew that comes back to Crosslake after a transport, shift changes in Crosslake, and utilizes the station. Our city, and the northern region of Crow Wing County would be of benefit.

Let's take a proactive approach—reinstating a dedicated team here would reduce response times and, more importantly, **save lives**.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

**With sincere regards,**

Mayor Jackson M. Purfeerst