

From: Esther Bello
Sent: Monday, October 10, 2005 6:34 PM
To: dburch@co.san-joaquin.ca.us
Subject: AMR Bid for County Ambulance Service

Mr. Dan Burch,

I am writing to express to you my opposition to award AMR the contract to service the County's medical transport needs. I have experienced first hand on two occasions AMR's incompetence and inability and/or apathy to service *basic* medical needs.

I was transported by AMR from my home to the hospital on two different occasions -- both times due to a severe asthma attack. On both occasions, the crew of three behaved so immature and unprofessional to the point that I felt like I was dealing with a bunch of teenagers working at a McDonald's who did not care about their jobs. I also wondered if they had forgotten about me and my plight. They totally seemed unconcerned for me. On the first occasion, they took so many detours on the way to the hospital that the third crew member who was attending to me in the back yelled at them words to the effect: "Quit fooling around! Her chest is getting tight!" "Where are you guys going?" My husband who had to change clothing (This incident was in the dead of night) got the hospital well in advance of AMR.

On the second occasion, the same AMR crew responded to transport me. On that occasion, I was left unattended in the ambulance unit for about ten minutes while the crew stood right outside chit chatting amongst each other. I could overhear my husband tell them several times to go ahead to the hospital. That obviously went unheeded. Finally, I believe a fireman told the crew to get going and to take me to the County Hospital since it was closest because my situation was bad. I would have preferred St. Joseph's Hospital because they are familiar with my history. During this transport, all that was done for me was have an oxygen mask put over my face. Had they properly examined me like they should have, they would have found my breathing was worsening and would have intubated me. By the time I arrived at the hospital, my throat was completely closed and I had to have an emergency tracheotomy performed. Besides nearly losing my life, I had to stay in the hospital for three weeks.

I initially thought it was just particular crew who transported me that had such poor attitude and I wanted to bring it to the attention of AMR. I really felt and still feel the incompetence on the part of the ambulance crew to perform their jobs and blatant indifference towards my situation had to be addressed. However, after talking to a manager (I forget his name) at the AMR Office in Modesto, professionalism, along with compassion, is definitely not part of the culture there. When I spoke with the manager, he was immediately hostile and unreceptive to me, which was unprovoked. I first filed a written complaint to Ana Valadez detailing the incidents and my complaint.

The residents of San Joaquin County deserve better than AMR. I am imploring you to reject the bid from AMR to meet San Joaquin County's medical transport needs. I feel it is of utmost importance that the County choose an ambulance service that has personnel that are professional, ethical, responsible, and capable and willing to perform their jobs. AMR barely got me to the hospital in time within City of Stockton limits. I can just envision how long it will take them while in the distant areas of the County. If AMR is chosen, I am serious when I say residents might as well call a friend or family member to take them to the hospital. Not only will they get to the hospital a lot sooner, but they'll also have someone with them at least caring for their plight, and may even have a better chance of surviving. I hardly fill AMR fits the bill to handle San Joaquin County's life and death needs.

I happened to share my horrible experience with AMR with others, and I've met many others who've also had negative contact with AMR. I will encourage them to also voice their opposition to AMR receiving this bid.

If you are not the one I should direct my concern to, please direct me to the proper personnel. Please also inform me if the public will have a chance to voice their concern on this matter before the County's Board of Supervisors comes to a decision. I would truly appreciate your direction in this matter. You may contact me either by e-mail or phone (209) 948-5647.

Sincerely,
Estrellita Bello