

March 9, 2006

M E M O R A N D U M

**TO: MEMBERS, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MANUEL LOPEZ, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**FROM: KENNETH B. COHEN, DIRECTOR
HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

**SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF
EXCLUSIVE EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE IN ZONES A, B,
AND C**

The transition to Exclusive Emergency Ambulance services in zones A, B, and C is moving forward on multiple fronts. EMS Agency staff is meeting weekly with representatives of American Medical Response (AMR) to ensure a smooth, safe, and on-time transition of emergency ambulance services effective May 1, 2006. A summary of our progress since the Board's approval of the AMR contract on January 17, 2006, is provided below.

1. Initial Deployment

- A. Ambulance Deployment Plan – AMR's initial deployment plan has sixteen 24-hour ambulance, and six 12-hour ambulances. Zone A (greater Lodi area) will have four ambulances 24-hours per day. Zone B (greater Stockton area) will have nine 24-hour ambulances with six 12-hour ambulances. Zone C (greater Tracy area) will have three 24-hour ambulances. AMR's initial deployment plan includes provisions for drawing additional resources from their eleven non-emergency advanced life support (ALS) ambulances during times of unusual system demand.

As structured, the initial deployment plan will provide more than the minimum 3,024 unit hours per week required by contract.

- B. Ambulance Stations – AMR will have stations for the each of the sixteen 24-hour ambulances. Eleven stations are currently owned or leased. AMR is in the process of obtaining additional stations in Victor, North West Lane, Main and Filbert, I-205, and Tracy Boulevard.
- C. New Ambulances – The contract with AMR required the purchase of 25 new ambulances. To date five units have been delivered and inspected by the EMS Agency. Additionally, AMR has provided documentation from Leader Industries in Southern California guaranteeing the delivery of the remainder of the new ambulance vehicles to AMR by mid-April 2006.

- D. Required Equipment Purchases – EMS has verified the purchase of the following required initial equipment:
- 25 LifePak-12 monitor/defibrillators – \$449,226.
 - 25 Stryker power assist gurneys and stair chairs – \$376,294.
 - Disposable and non-disposable medical supplies including 100 long spine boards for distribution throughout the EMS system - \$127,000.
 - 30 automatic external defibrillators (AED) to be distributed to rural fire districts (ten per zone) \$47,850.

2. Emergency Ambulance Dispatch

- A. LIFECOM – AMR's LIFECOM dispatch center is scheduled to be operational April 3, 2006. This center has already received designation as a State of California approved 911 public safety answering point (PSAP) and accreditation as a Center of Excellence by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch.
- B. On February 2, 2006, the San Joaquin County Sheriff's Department Communications Division and the EMS Agency hosted a meeting of the County's PSAP coordinators. The purpose of the meeting was to review and answer questions regarding the changes being made to the 911 system with addition of LIFECOM. Seven of the nine PSAPs were represented at the meeting with only the City of Escalon and the California Highway Patrol absent. The 911 representative from SBC/ATT was present to provide an update on the installation of San Joaquin County 911 equipment at LIFECOM and to offer assistance to the nine primary PSAPs. Chris Rose, Senior Deputy County Administrator and Jerry Becker, Interim Director of the San Joaquin County Information Services Division (ISD) representing County Communications also attended the meeting. AMR is responsible for all costs associated with the integration of LIFECOM into the County's 911 system.
- C. CAD to CAD Links – The EMS Agency received a letter from the City of Stockton Fire Department agreeing to explore a CAD to CAD link between LIFECOM and the City of Stockton Fire Department dispatch center for the simultaneous notification of EMS calls for first response agencies dispatched by the City. AMR is actively working with its CAD vendor to prepare the necessary interface, programming language and information for the City of Stockton. AMR is responsible for the cost of developing the CAD to CAD link including costs associated with development of an import interface by the City's technical staff or the City's CAD vendor.
- D. Manteca District Ambulance Service (Zone D), Ripon Consolidated Fire District (Zone E), and Escalon Community Ambulance (Zone F) notified the EMS Agency that they will join LIFECOM effective May 1, 2006, consolidating all emergency ambulance dispatch for San Joaquin County at a single center.

- E. A major component of managing the emergency ambulance system in Zones A, B, and C, is the real-time monitoring of vehicle location via automatic vehicle locators (AVL). AVL is similar to other global positioning system (GPS) tracking systems. The AMR contract requires the use of AVL in all of AMR's emergency ambulances. Additionally, Manteca District Ambulance Service, Ripon Consolidated Fire District and Escalon Community Ambulance have voluntarily agreed to install and utilize AVL in all of their ambulances. With this enhancement LIFECOM dispatchers will know the exact location of all emergency ambulances in the County, at all times, enabling them to always dispatch the closest available ambulance regardless of zone or provider. The EMS Agency is working with each of the emergency ambulance providers to develop the necessary policies to ensure this seamless system of ambulance response.
- F. Back-up Dispatch Capabilities – During the final inspection of LIFECOM the EMS Agency will verify the capability of LIFECOM to switchover to AMR's REDCOM Center in Santa Rosa as a back up center. The transfer of LIFECOM dispatch to REDCOM may not exceed five minutes as specified in AMR's contract.

3. Monitoring Contract Requirements

- A. Reporting – County ISD provided AMR with the technical specifications and equipment requirements for the installation of computer equipment at the EMS Agency. These links will provide the EMS Agency with real-time direct access to the computer-aided dispatch counsels at LIFECOM, AMR's pre-hospital patient care record management system, and AMR's personnel certification/training database.
- B. Required System Components:
 - Training and Orientation of Personnel – the EMS Agency has reviewed AMR's new employee orientation curriculum, initial driver's training program, Haz-Mat training program, EMT-I and paramedic orientation and skills verification. Additionally, AMR has provided the EMS Agency with access to each employee's training and certification information through a secure internet connection.
 - Quality Improvement – The EMS Agency is providing feedback to AMR on needed changes to AMR's internal Quality Improvement (QI) Plan. Both AMR and the EMS Agency have recently hired QI Coordinators that will together on an on-going basis to ensure the integration of AMR's QI activities into the overall QI system for the EMS Agency.
 - Community Education Service (CES) – AMR is currently providing CES programs while it seeks to fill the vacant CES

Coordinator position. The final deadline for filling this position is May 1, 2006.

- C. Electronic Medical Records – the EMS Agency and its data consultant are working with AMR to make the necessary changes to AMR's proposed electronic patient care record system known as MEDs. The EMS Agency will ensure that MEDs meets the County's technical and privacy requirements as well as remaining consistent with national and State data collection standards.

4. Out-going Providers

- A. At the request of the EMS Agency, the City of Stockton Fire Department and Priority One Medical Transport have submitted plans addressing the transition of service. Each plan anticipates a continuous reduction of service by the outgoing provider as the May 1, 2006, transition date approaches. Priority One Medical Transport has removed one 24-hour ambulance from operation with the prior approval of the EMS Agency. The City of Stockton sought and was granted permission in December to remove one 24-hour ambulance from service. However, the City has yet to act on the EMS Agency's approval to remove the ambulance from service, nor provided an explanation for the delay.
- B. AMR Employment Opportunities – AMR agreed to provide recruitment and hiring opportunities for potentially displaced employees from the City of Stockton and Priority One Medical Transport. Recruitment notices were provide to both providers, posted on emergency department bulletin boards, and posted on the Internet. AMR hired 14 of 16 applicants from Priority One and the City of Stockton, and has completed its initial hiring of 42 new positions. AMR will continue to accept applications from displaced employees for future vacancies.

5. Other Considerations:

- A. Representatives of the City of Stockton continue to question the County's legal authority to have 911 emergency medical calls routed to AMR's dispatch center. Therefore it is possible that the City may challenge the routing of EMS related 911 calls occurring within the City of Stockton prior to the beginning of operation of the AMR dispatch center planned for May 1, 2006. Please contact me if you have questions about either the progress to date or the next steps in the process.

CC: Margaret Szczepaniak, HCS
Dan Cederborg, County Counsel
Chris Rose, CAO
Dan Burch, EMS