



PUTNAM COUNTY FIRE & EMS



ADVISORY BOARD.

Justin Lewis
Night of mtg 7/20

cc: A11
7/21/23

add it

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July 20, 2023

RE: Advanced Life Support in Putnam County contract effective 7/16/2023

To Putnam County Executive Kevin Byrne & the Putnam County Protective Services Committee

As Chair of the Putnam County Fire and EMS Advisory Board I'm writing this letter to express concerns about the new proposal by the new Advanced Life Support Company, Empress EMS that the county has recently engaged with. In the proposal received by all agencies on or about July 13, 2023, it states Empress EMS will be billing \$400.00 for an ALS intercept to the transporting agency upon request for services. This \$400.00 proposal is billed through each agencies billing company if they have one. Historically billing for ALS Intercepts was primarily an agreed upon contract between each agency that had the ability to bill for services. In most cases this was Volunteer Ambulance Corps. However, in the spring of 2022 New York State has passed legislation that allows Volunteer Fire Departments that have associated ambulances the ability to bill for services now as well.

As the transition occurred from the counties previous Advanced Life Support provider to the new one, proposals were sent to each agency in the county that had a transporting ambulance that this cost for services would be implemented at the signing of the proposal. In some cases, agencies like fire departments that have never billed for services before, this was the first time these agencies realized they had an obligation to pay for ALS services.

This proposal presents a financial hardship to the Fire and EMS agencies providing Emergency Medical Services to the residents of their response areas, and surrounding communities. Because the previous vendor engaged by the county was not billing for ALS Intercepts to fire departments and the cost that Volunteer Ambulance Corps where incurring where much less than what was requested in the proposal. Agencies were not prepared for this expense at this time. As most are halfway through there fixed budgets for the 2023 fiscal year and incurring an additional expense at this time could create difficulties in paying for this service and managing the current needs of the individual organizations that have been put into place already. The new contract that was signed and went into effect July 16, 2023, has the potential impede emergency services agencies as they are not prepared to pay the \$400.00 for ALS Intercept, and EMS Agencies budgeted based on a lower amount for the service.

Patient care is the utmost important factor here, however it's unrealistic to expect that financing does not apply or impact the means in which emergency medical services on all levels are affected. It's the local communities, patients and the agencies providers who pay the ultimate price. Currently for ALS calls being billed to Medicare and Medicaid Patients, the returns from the insurance company is approximately \$175.00, which means the remainder of \$225.00 will have to come from the agency's budget. For agencies not billing, they would have to pay the whole bill from their budget.

In closing, it is the understanding that each individual organization impacted by this proposal will have to sit with the counties new ALS Provider and negotiate in good faith to come to an agreed upon amount for ALS intercept services and that amount should be relatively even across the board to all impacted. However, we hope that the counties new ALS Provider will work with the individual agencies to some kind of resolve and work with them as they have to prepare for the future with their 2024 Budgets.

Thank you for your time and attention and as always stay safe.

Firematically Yours,



Justyn Lewis
Chairman Putnam County Fire and EMS Advisory Board