



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
ADMINISTRATION

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ²⁵¹

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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March 31, 1999

AGENDA: April 13, 1999

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission Dissolution

Dear Board Members:

In December, 1997, your Board approved a five-year agreement with American Medical Response (AMR) for the provision of Advanced Life Support (paramedic) ambulance services. The contract between the County and AMR called for the establishment of an Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission to share contract oversight responsibility with HSA and the County Auditor. Following contract approval, an ordinance establishing a citizen-based Compliance Commission was adopted, appointments made and, in April, 1998, the Commission began meeting.

At the time the contract was under development, a great deal of discussion occurred over how contract oversight and monitoring should occur. Though it is common for governmental agencies to include monitoring provisions in contracts, it is relatively unusual to assign responsibility and authority to citizen commissions. It is more common to have citizen commissions serve in advisory capacities with decision-making passing through employed staff to the elected Board of Supervisors. When the existing commission was established, there was discussion regarding the possibility of the County eventually adopting a traditional method of contract monitoring utilizing employed staff.

The ambulance contract is now in its fifteenth month. The contracted services are meeting community needs, the system response requirements are being 'met, and the system finances are adequate to maintain a balance between expenditures and revenues.

Members of the existing Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission, along with others in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) community, have engaged in prolonged discussions in recent months about the future of the Commission and whether current circumstances present an opportunity to redefine or redirect monitoring responsibilities. As an outgrowth of these discussions, the Commission on March 26, 1999, adopted by unanimous vote the following motion:

“ That HSA administration propose to the Board of Supervisors that the Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission cease operating no later than June 30, 1999.”

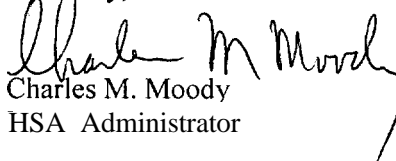
The HSA Administrator and HSA staff working on EMS issues are in agreement with this motion.

If your Board accepts this recommendation and concurs with the July 1, 1999 date for conversion to an alternative monitoring method, and directs staff to begin the planning for the conversion, it is anticipated that it will take several weeks to identify all issues that will need to be considered. Changes in contract oversight will require amending the existing contract which will provide an opportunity to consider other contract issues that might be resolved through contract changes.


With above consideration, it is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Approve the dissolution of the Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission, effective June 30, 1999; and
2. Direct the HSA Administrator and County Counsel to review the ordinance establishing the Commission and to recommend changes necessary to result in the dissolution of said Commission; and
3. Direct the HSA Administrator, County Counsel, and the Auditor-Controller to identify various issues including, but not limited to, contract matters requiring attention as a result of Commission dissolution, and report back with recommendations on these issues; and
4. Direct the HSA Administrator, County Counsel, and the Auditor-Controller to recommend interim steps that should be taken prior to July 1, 1999, to assure that appropriate EMS service oversight occurs; and
5. Direct the HSA Administrator to provide recommendations for ongoing ambulance administrative oversight, including possible roles and responsibilities for the Emergency Medical Care Commission (EMCC), other County Departments, and other public agencies involved in EMS matters; and
6. Direct that recommendations on the above issues be reported back to the Board on or before May 18, 1999.

Sincerely,


Charles M. Moody
HSA Administrator

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

CMM/amg

cc: CAO
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller
Ambulance Contract Compliance Commission