
**CITY OF COSTA MESA
FIRE DEPARTMENT
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

TO: DANIEL A. STEFANO, FIRE CHIEF

FROM: JASON PYLE, DIVISION CHIEF

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2016

SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF ADDING A PRIVATE PARAMEDIC TO THE AMBULANCE PROVIDER FOR TRANSPORT

As directed, the following is the operational review of adding a private paramedic to the ambulance provider for transport. Although, this concept is not consistent and coordinated with the currently approved EMS medical plan, it is always important and valuable to be mindful of the ever evolving EMS landscape.

On December 18, 2015, Staff met with the Orange County Medical Director, Dr. Stratton. From that meeting the following information was obtained. Per Dr. Stratton, adding a private paramedic to a private ambulance for 911 emergency response and transport is a change to the approved OCEMSA medical plan. Any medical plan change needs to be approved by the County Medical Director, Dr. Stratton. To do a medical plan change the jurisdiction would need to submit to Dr. Stratton a request that details the change. The Medical Director would then evaluate the request and develop the parameters for the new medical plan. This would include any conditions, stipulations and restrictions on the plan. The Medical Director would also establish, if needed, new guidelines and standing orders that the new medical plan would need to follow.

When discussing a medical plan change, Dr. Stratton identified that he supports the current Fire Department based First Responder EMS system that includes two firefighter paramedics to respond. Additionally, Dr. Stratton identified that by state law, all medical plans need to be consistent and coordinated. While placing a single private paramedic on a transport ambulance does enhance its capability, it lacks elasticity and compatibility with the currently approved EMS system in Orange County. This position is shared by Dr. Stratton as well. However, should there be a county wide system change to the currently approved medical plan, then the elasticity, effectiveness and compatibility of the afore mentioned concept would be reevaluated.

After reviewing the concept of adding a private paramedic to the ambulance provider for transport, the following was identified:

1. The conceptual medical plan change does not change the current deployment of emergency resources.
 - a. The private ambulance is a transport unit, the Fire Department remains the Advanced Life Support First Responder.
2. The conceptual medical plan change would be unique to the Costa Mesa area and would not be consistent and coordinated with the current EMS medical plan that operates throughout the county.
3. The City of Costa Mesa will have a potential decrease in revenue.
 - a. The City receives ALS cost recovery from the insurance company for ALS transport in the amount of \$289,288, if the Fire Department Paramedics were replaced by a private paramedic the City could see a loss of cost recovery of up to \$289,288.
4. The conceptual medical plan change will increase the operational costs to the private company.
 - a. The private transport company will have the increased operational cost of employing a higher paid paramedic vs an EMT. Per payscale.com, paramedic pay is an increase of 48% - 64% over an EMT.