



FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 1186
AMERICAN CANYON, BENICIA, CORDELIA, FAIRFIELD,
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Birgitta Corsello, Chair
Solano Emergency Medical Services Cooperative
355 Tuolumne Street, Suite 2400
Vallejo, CA 94590

Submitted via Email

RE: RFP/ Blueprint Report

Dear Chair Corsello:

The International Association of Firefighters Local 1186 has reviewed the draft blueprint and Request for Proposal (RFP) for the next Solano County Exclusive Operating Contract (EOA) for ambulance service. The local would like to address a handful of concerns with the proposal. First and foremost, the Local was not invited to participate in the stakeholder meetings hosted by the consultant, Page, Wolfberg & Wirth, that was used to create the draft "Blueprint", despite the fact that we represent nearly 200 Solano County EMTs and Paramedics throughout the county. The members within our local chose this career to help people and serve the community. These recommendations do the opposite.

The local recognizes and supports the need to move the Solano County EMS system in a progressive direction, but it appears the consultant has provided a less than creative list of recommendations. By creating such a grandiose list without providing any alternatives, the consultant has led the JPA to believe there is only one option.

The consultant's recommendations are primarily based on the financial stability of the system with far less emphasis on optimizing patient outcomes. The document fails to mention the desire to provide an excellent pre-hospital EMS system to the citizens of Solano County.

Below is a list of concerns regarding the proposed service delivery concepts:

- **Recommendation 1 - Tiered EMS Response**

The local agrees with the benefit of the EMD program consisting of pre-arrival instructions and criteria to determine the appropriate level of response. We are not supportive of any system that would not include the Fire Departments' simultaneous response for 9-1-1 calls. Our fire resources are strategically located in the communities we are sworn to protect, and it would be a disservice to our residents to have trained, experienced paramedics in the neighborhood not

included in the response, especially when considered in conjunction with the excessive increase in response times proposed by the consultant.

- **Recommendation 2 - Central Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD)**

The local is in favor of establishing Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) for the Solano County EMS system allowing for pre-arrival instructions to all persons living within and visiting Solano County.

The Solano County EMS Agency has the ultimate authority when it comes to establishing an EMD program. The local public safety answering points (PSAP's) cannot arbitrarily establish an EMD program without policies, procedures and oversight preestablished by the Solano County EMS Agency.

The consultant did not provide any options for the local agencies to maintain control of their PSAP's through the RFP Blueprint.

The local PSAP's can provide the EMD service with some advanced notice and could be improved to also include CAD-to-CAD information-sharing. This system would allow for significantly reduced response times, real-time information sharing, and improved accuracy of transmitted information. This technology would improve our current system and allow us to continue to be an excellent pre-hospital EMS system serving the citizens of Solano County.

The consultant leads the JPA to believe that all dispatchers need to be centralized to deliver the same level of care and to have consistency in the call-taking process, including providing pre-arrival instructions. This couldn't be more misleading to the JPA. The dispatchers in the individual PSAP's would be operating under policies and procedures no different than a Paramedic operating in Vacaville, or one in Benicia; they both fall under the same policies, procedures and protocols and overseen by a CQI program.

Emergency medical dispatch is a core public safety responsibility. For public safety and accountability, it should remain the province of the agencies for whom it a sacred mission – a service for which they are trained and sworn to provide.

Finally, bifurcating EMS dispatch away from the current public safety dispatch centers creates unacceptable employee safety issues for my members. In our current system, the dispatch centers dispatching 9-1-1 calls for medical emergencies are the same dispatch centers responsible for simultaneously dispatching police and rescue units. Many EMS incidents require a coordinated response from EMS, Fire/Rescue, and Law Enforcement. This is a cornerstone of personnel safety.

- **Recommendation 4 - Response Time Performance Standards**

The increased response times that are proposed for a majority of incidents go against everything an EMS system stands for. These response times do not reflect what is best for a patient and their ultimate outcome; rather they only protect the contractor. The contemplation that a citizen with a minor to moderate issue can theoretically wait up to an hour for an ambulance to arrive based on where they choose to live goes against any mission or value statement. Has the public been informed and/or approached by the Solano County EMS on this potential impact?

There is a proposed provision that would eliminate payment for situations (Charlie, Delta, Echo response) in which an ALS ambulance is on scene prior to the arrival of the ALS fire first response unit, and all Alpha/Bravo-level calls for which the PPP city elects to respond.

This will create an unsafe practice where crews will be racing to the scene to ensure they arrive first to ensure financial gain, rather than to provide appropriate medical care in a timely manner. This model would be extremely reckless and counterproductive.

- **Recommendation 5 - The EMS Public-Private Partnership**

Again, the consultant's recommendations are centered around increasing revenue for the private, for-profit contractor vs. increasing the level of service to our citizens. The funds provided through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) are reinvested directly into the County's EMS system by providing first responder Paramedics to our residents. The proposed language significantly reduces the agreement by removing Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie calls and incentivizing the contractor to race to the scene prior to the first responder Paramedics.

Member cities of the Public Private Partnership want to enhance the agreement while the current proposal would decrease service.

- **Recommendation 13 - Experience Requirement**

This recommendation is far too restrictive and should not preclude any current fire agency operating in Solano County or any provider currently performing emergency medical services in Solano County from participating in the RFP process

The International Association of Firefighters Local 1186 recognizes there are positive changes for the future of the Solano County EMS system. The individual recommendations from the consultant, Page, Wolfberg & Wirth have multiple possible options not being presented that would accomplish the same vision--to provide an excellent pre-hospital EMS system to the citizens and visitors of Solano County.

Local 1186 appreciates the work of the SEMSC and we ask that the board strongly considers the feedback in this letter on behalf of the majority of the Solano County first responders.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthews", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Todd Matthews
President, Firefighters Local 1186

cc: Ted Selby, Administrator, Solano County Health and Social Services Department
Solano County Supervisors
SEMSC Board