



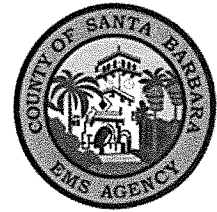
#8

de la Guerra, Sheila **Public Comment**

From: Shepherd, Daniel
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 1:06 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Mouhanad Hammami; Clay, Nicholas (Nick)
Subject: Public comment 4/4/23 item D-8
Attachments: Shepherd BOS letter_final 4.3.2023.docx

Please see attached.

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Nick Clay, EMS Agency Director
Daniel Shepherd, MD EMS Agency Medical Director

April 3, 2023

Das Williams, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Chair Williams and Members of the Board,

I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the trajectory of the emergency medical services system in Santa Barbara County. The clinical excellence our County enjoys is a product of the dedication and collaboration of stakeholders across the clinical spectrum. These efforts have resulted in an award-winning heart attack system, exceptional trauma and stroke systems, and one of the best cardiac arrest survival rates in the country.

A "nonexclusive" model for ambulance transport would threaten the stability of the system, introduce regional inequality, and jeopardize an outstanding standard of care that took decades to establish. Exclusivity is an incentive that allows the County to demand clinical excellence and impose repercussions for poor performance. It also allows the County to ensure that the transport provider is providing a consistent standard of care across the region. A nonexclusive system will result in a disjointed, fragmented system with pockets of "haves" and "have-nots." Higher call volume areas with an attractive payor mix will enjoy a higher level of service than those without those attributes. Outcomes in less advantaged areas will suffer as a result.

The guidance from the Board in 2019 was that an RFP would not only maintain, but possibly improve, our high-functioning system. This is still a possibility but requires that the County be deliberate and steadfast in how it navigates the next steps. Emergency medical services are an essential component of healthcare delivery in the United States. People trust the 911 system implicitly; some for help in an emergency, some because they have nowhere else to turn. Negotiation for an exclusive contract gives the County the ability to guarantee patients get what they need when they call for help. An exclusive contract defines the standard and demands accountability for default.

I am concerned that the focus has been on the bidders themselves rather than the future viability and performance of the EMS system. The question isn't Fire or AMR, public or private, it is what is best for the one asking for help, the sick or injured who are relying on our response? As the physician responsible for oversight of the EMS system, I feel it is my duty to advise your Board when the integrity of that system is threatened. I urge you to complete the

procurement process so that our EMS system can continue to provide high-quality, reliable care.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Shepherd', written in a cursive style.

Daniel Shepherd, MD
Medical Director, Santa Barbara County Emergency Medical Services Agency
Emergency Physician