



May 25, 2023

Supervisor Laura Capps
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District
105 E. Anapamu St, 4th Floor
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Dear Supervisor Capps,

As the Board of Supervisors considers proposals for the provision of ambulance services in the County of Santa Barbara, our community's hospitals advocate for maintaining or improving ambulance responsiveness and high standards of care under a new ordinance.

In an emergency, prompt and efficient transport to the hospital is critically important for the patient. Therefore, a responsive transport system is vital for hospitals and the patients we serve.

During 2022:

Ambulances delivered more than 31,000 patients to hospitals throughout Santa Barbara County.

Almost 5,000 patients were transported between one hospital and another, including hundreds of psychiatric transports to facilities in Bakersfield, Los Angeles and beyond.

There were 356 critical care transports that connected patients to a higher level of life-saving care.

While hospitals view this new provider model as an opportunity to advance the highest standards of care, enhance the current system, and improve patient outcomes, hospitals have not been consulted on how this new model will impact our ability to deliver superior patient care.

As the recipients of 31,000 ambulance transports annually, hospitals are concerned about ambulance response times, the transfer of the critically ill, transport for mental health patients, and timeliness and access issues.

The system must ensure that medically necessary, albeit unprofitable, IFT and CCT transports must still be provided in a manner that retains or improves existing standards of care.

Additionally, ambulance services must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for all services, including IFT and CCT, to safely meet the needs of patients requiring transportation to the appropriate level and type of care. Any ordinance that does not require evening and weekend coverage is dangerous. Any deterioration of existing standards would be harmful to patient care and create poor outcomes for the critically ill.

Lastly, hospitals want to voice concern for residents in remote, rural, and underpopulated areas of the county. Timely access to emergency services and maintaining response times for outlying communities are important; in some cases, every minute matters.

We urge you to consider timely access to care for all of Santa Barbara County's residents and guests. The health of our community depends upon a robust response by all ambulance providers serving the county.

Hospitals would like to be a resource to you as you work toward improving and enhancing emergency response by ambulance service providers. Please do not hesitate to contact any of us with questions.

Sincerely,



Ron Werft
President & CEO
Cottage Health



Sue Andersen
President & CEO
Marian Regional Medical Center



Steve Popkin
Chief Executive Officer
Lompoc Valley Medical Center