

MEMORANDUM

To: Members, Board of Supervisors

From: Frank J. Rogers, County Administrator FJR

Subject: Volunteer Ambulance Transport Fee Relief Program

Date: October 26, 2020

BACKGROUND:

The Campbell County Code Chapter 10, Section 10-65 deals with the matter of EMS transport fees. This Chapter of Code was amended on September 5, 2006. Specifically, this amendment to our Code deleted prior language which exempted members of certain County volunteer rescue and EMS agencies, volunteer fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and their immediate families from being billed for ambulance transport..." The exemption was removed from the Code based upon an Office of Inspector General (OIG) opinion requiring that all patients be treated equally or the provider (in this case the County) would have to forgo Medicaid payments/reimbursements.

At the November 1, 2016 meeting, the Board of Supervisors authorized staff to proceed with what has become known as hard billing. Under this program, third party insurers are billed for ambulance transport fees. Any outstanding balance that is not paid by the insurance company becomes the responsibility of the individual who received service.

The fees for ambulance transports are established by the Board of Supervisors and are routinely set to insure that the County captures the available insurance reimbursements. The current fee structure was last adopted at the May 23, 2016 meeting of the Board of Supervisors. At the October 6, 2020 meeting of the Board, Supervisor Hardie asked (and the Board concurred) that staff explore options to assist volunteers as a means of recognizing their critical contribution to our community.

DISCUSSION:

From time to time, members of the Fire and Rescue volunteer agencies (or members of their immediate families) experience a need for emergency medical transport. These individuals are billed in the same fashion as all other County residents, staff, visitors etc. When these costs are incurred by volunteer providers, the County is sometimes asked to waive the fee.

As previously noted, the County is required to treat all who receive medical transport and who are subsequently billed for this service the same. This would preclude the County from offering relief as a benefit to the volunteers who provide such a valuable service to the community.

However, the County may develop a separate, stand-alone program to consider reimbursement of this expense. Under such a program, staff would propose that any active volunteer (defined as someone on an agency roster and who has run at least one call in each of the previous six months) or member of their household (defined as someone whose permanent residence is the same as that

of the active volunteer) be eligible for relief of any out of pocket expenses associated with an emergency medical transport bill.

This would mean that volunteers and members of their household will still have their insurance billed and will be required to pay any additional balance on those bills. However, in December of each year, any volunteer who has incurred such cost for their own transport or for the transport of someone in their household during that calendar year, may make application to the County to be reimbursed the out of pocket expense over and above the insurance reimbursement for that transport. Staff proposes that individuals would be eligible to request reimbursement for up to two (2) medical transport bills in a single year.

In order to fund the program, staff recommends that \$10,000 be taken from the County's current Unassigned Fund Balance to establish the program for calendar year 2020. In subsequent budgets, staff will include a request for funding based upon demand for the program.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Board authorize the staff to implement the program as proposed and to make the necessary transfer from the Unassigned Fund Balance to initiate the program.