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September 5, 2017

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
City Hall, Room 395  
Attn: City Clerk

Honorable Eric Garcetti  
Mayor, City of Los Angeles  
Room 303, City Hall  
Attn: Mandy Morales, Legislative Coordinator

[BFC 17-103] – DIGNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE ADDITIONAL ADVANCED PROVIDER RESPONSE UNITS (APRUs)

At its meeting of September 5, 2017, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the Dignity Health Partnership to create additional Advanced Provider Response Units report and its recommendations. The report is hereby transmitted concurrently to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and approval.

Should you need additional information, please contact the Board of Fire Commissioners' office at 213-978-3838.

Sincerely,

Isela Iñiguez  
Acting Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

cc: Board of Fire Commissioners (without attachments)  
Fire Chief Ralph M. Terrazas (without attachments)

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



APPROVED. 9/5/2017  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
BY: [Signature]  
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

RALPH M. TERRAZAS  
FIRE CHIEF

August 24, 2017

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 17-103

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: R.M.T. Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: DIGNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE AN ADDITIONAL  
ADVANCED PROVIDER RESPONSE UNIT (APRU)

FINAL ACTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

**SUMMARY**

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Advanced Provider Response Unit (APRU) is a safe and effective model to intervene with patients earlier in their course of emergency care, prevent unnecessary Emergency Department (ED) visits, and refocus prehospital encounters to identify unmet needs and link patients to primary and preventative care. The EMS Advanced Provider is an Advanced Provider (AP) or Physician Assistant (PA), who are professional healthcare providers who possess a broad scope of practice to open the door to more advanced out-of-hospital care delivery. This includes immediate treatment and release, medical clearance, and patient navigation to non-emergent medical and non-medical services. Public-private partnerships funding additional APRUs would leverage the resources of community health partners and payers with the expertise and community presence of the LAFD in order to help patients get the right care at the right time at the right location. Dignity Health- California Hospital Medical Center has provided a donation of \$165,000 to the Fire Foundation for this purpose.

Annual full cost recovery for an EMS AP position is \$274,416 (\$165,723 for salary and benefits + \$108,693 for indirect costs).

The \$165,000 donation from Dignity Health will fund the salary and benefits of an EMS AP for 12 months to implement another APRU. The Department will request resolution authority for an EMS AP position through June 30, 2018. The LAFD would absorb the indirect costs of the position through the end of the Fiscal Year (FY). Continuation of the resolution authority will be included in the Department's FY 2018-19 Budget Request.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Board:

1. Approve this report and forward to the Mayor and City Council.
2. Request that City Council, subject to approval of the Mayor:
  - (a) Authorize the Fire Chief, or his designee, to accept a donation of \$165,000 from Dignity Health-California Hospital Medical Center through the Fire Foundation for the EMS Advanced Provider Program.
  - (b) Authorize the Fire Department to deposit the donation into Fire Department Trust Fund No. 848, Department 38.
  - (c) Authorize the Controller to:
    - (i) Establish an appropriation account titled EMS Advanced Provider Program, account number to be determined (TBD), within Fund 848/ 38 for the disbursement of the EMS Advanced Provider Program funds;
    - (ii) Transfer appropriations from Fund No. 848/38, Account TBD, EMS Advanced Provider Program to Fire Department Fund 100/ 38, Salaries General Account 001010 for reimbursement of General Fund costs as needed and directed by the Fire Department for the salary of the EMS Advanced Provider and related costs.
  - (d) Authorize resolution authority for one EMS Advanced Provider (Code 2341) in the Fire Department, through June 30, 2018.
  - (e) Authorize the Fire Department to make any technical adjustments, subject to approval of the CAO, to comply with the intent of Council action on this matter, and authorize the Controller to implement the instructions.

## **FINDINGS**

The LAFD is the largest provider of acute, unscheduled medical care in Los Angeles, responding to over 350,000 incidents in 2015, a 7.8% increase from 2014. This increase is due in part to growing numbers of newly insured low acuity 911 callers, 911 frequent users, and an increasing homeless population, many of whom have primary mental health issues.

Patients arriving to the hospital by 911 with low acuity medical problems or patients requiring simple medical clearance tend to get additional testing in the ED, use of more hospital resources, and increase overall ED length-of-stay and an increase in resultant

ambulance wall-time. Innovative solutions are clearly needed in order to identify, treat and navigate these patients to more appropriate clinical sites outside of the hospital and providing alternative transport than using ambulances, while simultaneously providing linkage to ongoing care and culturally-sensitive health teaching.

In January 2016, LAFD launched an Advanced Provider Response Unit (formerly known as the Nurse Practitioner Response Unit): a converted ambulance with modern point-of-care testing and patient referral capabilities, operated by an experienced Advanced Provider and Firefighter/Paramedic with public health training. APs have a broader scope of practice, can function autonomously, have training in health promotion and recognizing social determinants of health, and can treat/release patients on scene.

The APRU's specific missions include:

1. **MOBILE URGENT CARE:** The APRU augments standard deployment of 911-resources to patients with low-acuity conditions, offering on-scene evaluation, testing, medication, immediate care and referral for follow-up. Those patients who receive APRU care may be treated and released on scene and can be referred to follow-up with their doctor or clinic.
2. **COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF EMS SUPER USERS:** The APRU proactively engages EMS super users (patients with chronic or accelerating use of 911), offers a needs assessment and refers patients to *Partners in Care* - a non-profit organization that specializes in linkage to care. *Partners in Care* has a health coach visit the patient within 24 hours free of charge, performs a psychosocial assessment, has a pharmacist reconcile their medications, and a dedicated social worker who helps craft a coordinated care plan in concert with the patient's primary care provider.
3. **MEDICAL CLEARANCE OF SELECT MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS:** Patients with primary mental health complaints who meet certain criteria are medically cleared by the Advanced Provider on scene, and then transported directly to a psychiatric urgent care – thus obviating the need for lengthy ED stays and placement from the ED.
4. **MEDICAL CLEARANCE OF SELECT INEBRIATED PATIENTS:** Patients who are publically inebriated, particularly the serial inebriates, who meet specific clinical criteria will be medically cleared by the EMS Advanced Provider on scene, and then transported directly to the Department Health Services (DHS) Sobering Center. At the Sobering Center, these patients can be placed into detox and transitional housing. This will decrease the need for costly and repeated ambulance transport to the EDs without any plan to address the patients' addictions.

## **PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO AUGMENT THE LAFD APRU PROGRAM**

Partnering with healthcare organizations who already have the infrastructure and relationships established within each neighborhood would allow LAFD to leverage its prehospital infrastructure together with existing local resources to help get patients the care they need. Healthcare organizations, such as individual hospitals, hospital systems or insurance providers, would provide the Fire Department with funding for an LAFD-employed Advanced Provider, while LAFD would provide the specialized ambulance, paramedic, and medical oversight. The APRU would pursue its mission of providing care for the entire community, regardless of a patient's insurance status. Both public and private entities would work together to create mechanisms of referral for APRU patients that would be unique to that specific community.

## **BENEFITS OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

The benefits of private sponsorship of these unique LAFD resources would be numerous:

Private healthcare sponsors funding APRUs for their community would see:

- More efficient selection of patients for ED care
- Decreased ED overcrowding
- Redirection of care to more cost-effective sites
- Pride in contributing to improved streamlining of care for all members of their community

Benefits to Local constituents include:

- Low-acuity 911-callers would get more timely care with an emphasis on health teaching and re-enforcing a patient's care with their primary care provider
- LAFD, with its geographic view of 911-frequent users around Los Angeles and unique ability to visit and understand a patient's home setting, would be able to reach out to these vulnerable adults and link them to much needed multi-disciplinary resources

Benefits to LAFD include:

- The APRU would free up resources in busy sectors of the city by offering immediate treatment, thus obviating the need for transport and delayed ED handoffs.
- LAFD members, by summoning the APRU to high-utilizers, would be able to play an active role in addressing root causes of 911-dependence, helping them to truly fulfil their mission of protecting the health of Los Angeles's population.

Benefits to the City of Los Angeles:

- Establishes new model of cost-effective deployment of additional resources by sharing the cost with local healthcare partners via Public- Private Partnerships.

The LAFD Advanced Provider Response Unit is an innovative and effective resource that allows for the safe treat and release of low acuity patients, transport of mental health patients to psychiatric urgent care facilities, and provides linkage to care for EMS super users. This public - private partnership will allow the LAFD to add an additional APRU with significant cost savings, laying the groundwork for potential future partnerships throughout the City.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Annual full cost recovery for an EMS Advanced Provider position is \$274,416 (\$165,723 for salary and benefits + \$108,693 for indirect costs). Dignity Health – California Hospital Medical Center has agreed to donate \$165,000 to the Los Angeles Fire Foundation to provide funding for salary and benefits for one EMS Advanced Provider to staff a new APRU for one year. The LAFD will absorb the indirect costs of the position and the cost of one Firefighter/Paramedic position to be assigned to partner with the Advanced Provider. The costs of medical supplies and the ambulance are included in the indirect costs of the Advanced Provider position.

Board Report prepared by Marc Eckstein, M.D., Medical Director, Commander, EMS Bureau.