

MOTION

~~PERSONNEL & ANIMAL WELFARE~~

**Los Angeles Fire Department Nurse Practitioner Response Unit Pilot**

The City of Los Angeles is at a crossroads. Year after year, the volume of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls handled by the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) increases. In 2013 alone, the LAFD responded to 339,379 EMS calls. At the same time, the number of emergency room beds in Los Angeles has failed to keep pace with the increased demand. This situation has resulted in long delays both for patients awaiting beds and for LAFD personnel who are required to accompany a patient until a bed is available.

Further stressing the system are two populations of EMS users; individuals that use 911 for minor health care needs that would be best treated at an urgent care facility or by their primary care physician, and a very small group of high frequency users.

Without reconsidering LAFD's current EMS response protocols, the imbalance in the system will continue to grow resulting in both higher costs for taxpayers and longer delays for patients. As such, the City of Los Angeles needs to develop a more efficient, coordinated, and integrated approach to delivering health care.

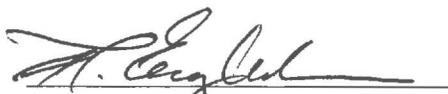
Two programs, if piloted successfully, would be critical first steps in bringing much needed relief to the City's EMS system.

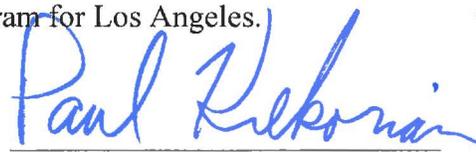
First, non-urgent, low level 911 call requests can be screened by LAFD Firefighter EMTs and rerouted to nurse practitioners within the LAFD organization. In their scope of practice, nurse practitioners can perform comprehensive on-site assessments and perform, treat and release, or treat and transfer. By implementing a nurse practitioner program into LAFD's EMS protocols, it should be possible to reduce unnecessary and expensive emergency transport. A similar program in Mesa, Arizona, the Physician Extender Program, has shown that employing nurse practitioners provides quality care and saves millions.

Second, to address the small population of patients who place a disproportionate burden on the EMS system, a monthly meeting should be convened between Los Angeles County EMS, area hospitals, County Health Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, and LAFD. The nurse practitioner unit envisioned above would play a key role. The goal of these meetings would be to coordinate care for individuals to best take advantage of under-utilized existing resources thereby minimizing their reliance on EMS transport.

**I THEREFORE MOVE**, that the Fire Department in consultation with United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, the City Legislative Analyst and Chief Administrative Officer, be directed to report back on the resources it would need to develop a Nurse Practitioner Pilot program for Los Angeles.

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