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August 2, 2016

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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  
City Hall, Room 303  
Attn: Mandy Morales, Legislative Coordinator

## [BFC 16-079] – PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE AN ADDITIONAL NURSE PRACTITIONER RESPONSE UNIT (NPRU)

At its meeting of August 2, 2016, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the 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,

Sandra Gonzalez  
Acting Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

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



July 21, 2016

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO.16-079

TO: *RMT* Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *RMT* Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: PUBLIC – PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO CREATE AN ADDITIONAL NURSE PRACTITIONER RESPONSE UNIT (NPRU)

FINAL ACTION:	<input 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 Withdrawn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) Nurse Practitioner Response Unit (NPRU) 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 Nurse Practitioner's broader scope of practice opens the door to more advanced out-of-hospital care delivery, including immediate treatment and release, medical clearance, and patient navigation to non-emergent medical and non-medical services. Public-private partnerships funding additional NPRUs 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. Cedars-Sinai Medical Center has provided a donation of \$159,000 to the Fire Foundation to enable the LAFD to fund a Nurse Practitioner position to expand the NPRU.

## 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) Accept and deposit into the Fire Department Trust Fund No. 848, Department 38, the cash donation of \$159,000 from the Fire Foundation to the City of Los Angeles for the EMS Nurse Practitioner Program.

- (b) Authorize the Controller to appropriate funds in Fire Department Fund No. 848, Department 38, in a new Account entitled EMS Nurse Practitioner Program.
- (c) Authorize the Controller to transfer funds from Fire Department Trust Fund No. 848, Department 38, EMS Nurse Practitioner Program to General Fund No.100, Department 38, Salaries General Account 001010 upon demand by the Fire Department.
- (d) Authorize the Fire Department to make technical corrections to comply with the intent of Council action on this matter.
- (e) Instruct the General Manager, Personnel Department, or designee, to establish a new classification of EMS Nurse Practitioner, subject to approval of the Civil Service Commission.
- (f) Instruct the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to establish the salary for the new classification of EMS Nurse Practitioner if the Civil Service Commission approves the new classification.
- (g) Authorize by resolution employment authority for one EMS Nurse Practitioner in the Fire Department, through June 30, 2017, subject to establishment of the new classification.

## 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, 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 a NPRU: a converted ambulance with modern point-of-care testing and patient referral capabilities, operated by an experienced Nurse Practitioner and Firefighter/Paramedic with public health training. Nurse Practitioners 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 NPRU's specific missions include:

- 1. MOBILE URGENT CARE:** The NPRU 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 NPRU 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 NPRU 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 Nurse Practitioner on scene, and then transported directly to a psychiatric urgent care – thus obviating the need for lengthy ED stays and placement from the ED.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO AUGMENT THE LAFD NPRU 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 Nurse Practitioner, while LAFD would provide the specialized ambulance, paramedic, and medical oversight. The NPRU 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 NPRU 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 NPRUs for their community would see:

- More efficient selection of patients for emergency department 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 NPRU 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 NPRU 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 LA'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

The LAFD Nurse Practitioner 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 NPRU with significant cost savings, laying the groundwork for potential future partnerships throughout the City.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center has agreed to donate \$159,000 to the Los Angeles Fire Foundation to pay the salary for one civilian EMS Nurse Practitioner to staff the new NPRU for one year. The LAFD will absorb the cost of one Firefighter/Paramedic position and medical supplies, at approximately \$217,000. The Department will provide a reserve ambulance at no additional cost.

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