

**Mountain Counties  
Emergency Medical Services Agency  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
December 15, 2023**

Location: Copperopolis Fire Station Training Room  
370 Main St., Copperopolis, CA 95228

Time: 9:00 AM

Board Members Present: Jeff Brown (Chairperson) – Amador County; Miles Menetrey (Vice Chairperson) – Mariposa County; Terry Woodrow - Alpine County; Gary Tofanelli – Calaveras County

Guests: Cori Allen – Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency; Alan McNany – American Legion Ambulance; Dr. Rita Kerr – Amador County Public Health; Chris Edgerly – Calaveras County Public Health; Eric Lewi - PHI

Staff: Tom Morton – Acting Executive Director; Susan Watson – Executive Secretary/Financial Services Assistant; Marc Stevenson – Disaster Preparedness Coordinator; Dr. Kimberly Freeman – Agency Medical Director; Derek Cole – Agency Counsel

**A. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by Chairperson Brown with a quorum of four members present.

**B. Welcome and Introductions**

All meeting attendees provided self introductions.

**C. Correspondence**

None

**D. Additions, Deletions, Corrections to Agenda**

M/S/C (Tofanelli/Woodrow) To approve the agenda as submitted.

Roll Call Vote:

Alpine County Aye

Amador County Aye

Calaveras County Aye

Mariposa County Aye

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**E. Public Forum**

None.

**F. Approval of Consent Calendar**

M/S/C (Woodrow/Menetrey) To approve the consent calendar.

Roll Call Vote:

Alpine County Aye

Amador County Aye

Calaveras County Aye

Mariposa County Aye

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**G. Agreement with NORCAL Ambulance for Non-Emergency Interfacility Transfers**

Mr. Morton presented the ambulance provider agreement with NORCAL Ambulance for Non-Emergency Interfacility Transfers. This provider is currently able to provide BLS and ALS services. They are gearing up to provide CCT support in the near future. To honor the Exclusive Operating Areas, NORCAL Ambulance will be an alternative provider in Amador, Calaveras and Mariposa counties when the designated emergency ground ambulance providers are not available to perform the requested transfer.

Mr McNany indicated his agreement with the contract as written. There are occasional needs for an alternative provider to complete some transfers. He spoke with Jesse Figueroa of Mercy Medical Transport in Mariposa County, who also agrees with the agreement as presented.

Chairperson Brown confirmed this would be non-emergency IFT transfers only.

Supervisor Tofanelli asked the closest point for responding to our region,

Mr. Morton replied that would be Stanislaus County.

M/S/C (Woodrow/Tofanelli) To approve the agreement with NORCAL Ambulance for Non-Emergency Interfacility Transfers.

Roll Call Vote:

Alpine County Aye

Amador County Aye

Calaveras County Aye

Mariposa County Aye

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**H. Agreement with AmWest Ambulance for Non-Emergency Interfacility Transfers**

Mr Morton stated this is a similar agreement as just approved in the previous item with the exception this provider can only perform BLS level service at this time. The same circumstances exist in this agreement regarding the Exclusive Operating Areas.

**M/S/C** (Tofanelli/Woodrow) To approve the agreement with AmWest Ambulance for Non-Emergency Interfacility Transfers.

Roll Call Vote:

Alpine County Aye

Amador County Aye

Calaveras County Aye

Mariposa County Aye

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**I. EMS Aircraft Services Agreement with REACH Air Medical Services. LLC**

Mr. Morton explained this agreement for air ambulance services throughout the region is with REACH Air Medical Services and they do not have a base within our member counties. Contract negotiations have been ongoing for several months. All differences have been resolved and Agency Counsel has reviewed the agreement multiple times. The agreement was resubmitted for signature by the provider, but only a verbal acceptance has been received to date.

Chairperson Brown asked where the bases are located.

Mr. Morton responded they are in several areas including Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties.

Mr. McNany questioned the legal name of the contractor in the agreement.

Mr. Morton and Ms. Watson clarified this is the legal name provided by REACH.

Supervisor Tofanelli confirmed the agreement has not yet been signed and expressed his concern to approve the agreement when it is unsigned. He recommended the vote today can indicate the Agency will not sign until the agreement is signed by the contractor.

**M/S/C (Toffanelli/Woodrow)** To approve the agreement with REACH Air Medical Services, LLC with the following stipulations: Mr. Morton is not to sign the document until Reach Air Medical Services signs it first; and Mr. Morton is to verify the legal name of the contractor.

Roll Call Vote:

Calaveras County Aye

Alpine County Aye

Amador County Aye

Mariposa County Aye

**Motion Passed 4-0**

**J. Procedure for Assigning Vehicles to be Used for Interfacility Transports**

Mr. Morton reported he was contacted on December 8, 2023 by Mr. McNany of American Legion Ambulance regarding a questionable decision to disregard a referring physician's request to transport a behavioral health patient out of county via the safety car. The full timeline of events is still being researched, but it appears that either the hospital or Calaveras County Behavioral Health or both decided the safety car would be an inappropriate level of service, thus requiring a BLS ambulance be taken out of 9-1-1 service to perform the transfer. American Legion Ambulance completed the transfer.

The question at hand is who has the authority to overrule the orders of a referring physician who is responsible for the patient's care until arrival at the receiving facility?

Supervisor Tofanelli stated something should be put in policy stating the referring physician's decision stands and any disagreements in mode of transport should be discussed with the physician.

Mr. McNany noted that Supervisor Tofanelli's recommended language is already in Agency Policy 470.00. He also observed this is primarily an education issue and cited specific reasons why transporting a potentially violent individual via safety car is much safer for both the patient and the crew.

Supervisor Tofanelli acknowledged Mr. McNany's comments and instructed Mr Morton to enhance the policy to indicate that any disagreements over mode of transport must be discussed with the referring physician.

Ms. Allen shared a conversation with Doug Archer, who indicated the physician, nurse, and ED Manager at the hospital all believed BLS transport was best for this patient. She suggested reviewing the documentation requirements to be sure they are clear.

Chairperson Brown asked Mr. McNany if two people are needed in the safety car is the patient is potentially violent.

Mr. McNany responded that two people are not needed. The structure of the safety car protects the driver and keeps the patient from escaping. The receiving facility will send out two or three mental health workers to transfer the patient from the safety car into the facility.

Dr. Kerr asked if mode of transport is considered a physician order when transporting a patient from one facility to another; and if so, wouldn't it require a change in the physician order to use a different mode of transport from what was originally requested?

Dr. Freeman responded the mode of transport is to be determined by the physician and the physician is to sign off on it. To transport in a different mode is a huge liability and the safety car is the much safer for these type of transports.

Mr. Morton said the Agency will look at the policy and include language to reflect if concerns are raised regarding the physician's order for mode of transport, those concerns will be addressed with the physician. Mr. Morton will also meet with the hospital CEOs in Amador and Calaveras Counties and determine further education opportunities for hospital staff. Similar meetings and education will take place with the County Behavioral Health agencies.

#### **K. Agency and County Reports**

Agency – Mr. Morton reported:

- Mr Morton went to the EMSAAC meeting last week:
  - An emphasis in the State right now is to be sure all providers are using the correct software version NLT December 31, 2023 to report data to the State's database. All of our providers are current with the exception of one. That will be resolved by next week.
  - There is legislation going into effect at the end of 2024 which will require the EMS Authority to intervene when Ambulance Patient Offload Times exceed 30 minutes. Hospitals in our region are efficient at receiving patients. The Agency will collaborate with the hospitals on reporting and notification procedures.
- The Agency is still waiting on the quote from the electrician.
- The EMS Duty Officer vehicle has not yet been sold.
- Ms. Watson reported three applications have been received so far for the Executive Secretary/Financial Services position. First interviews will be conducted the week of January 8, 2024.
- Ms. Watson shared the financial report is still in process.

Mariposa County – No report

Alpine County – No report.

Calaveras County – No report.

Amador County – No report.

**L. Closed Session**

The Board entered into closed session at 9:45 AM.

**M. Results of Closed Session**

The Board returned from closed session at 9:54 AM.

Mr. Cole reported the Board of Directors met in closed session to discuss an employee matter. Direction was given to staff and an update was received by the Board, but no other reportable action was taken.

**N. Next Scheduled Regular Meeting**

The Board discussed returning to a regular recurring meeting schedule and a set meeting date calendar for the year. It was agreed to do the third Friday of the even numbered months.

The next meeting will be:

Friday, February 16, 2024 at 9:00 AM in person at Copperopolis Fire Station. A Zoom option will be offered as well.\

A meeting date calendar for 2024 will be provided at the next meeting,

**O. Adjournment**

Chairperson Brown adjourned the meeting at 9:58 AM.