



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 5/21/2024

File #: 24-855

To: Board of Supervisors

From: DHHS: Public Health

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Request to Increase Ambulance Fee for Service Areas 3 (Eureka) and 4 (Fortuna/ Garberville)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and authorize an increase in billing rates for ambulance services provided in Service Areas 3 (Eureka) and 4 (Fortuna/Garberville).

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Workforce & Operational Excellence

Strategic Plan Category: 3002 - Invest in county facilities

DISCUSSION:

City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc is seeking to raise rates for ambulance services in Humboldt County in three increments. The first would be effective immediately upon approval and the second and third increases effective January 1, 2025 and January 1, 2026 respectively. The increase will be used to support substantial wage increases that started in 2023 and will continue through January 1, 2026 to bring City Ambulance clinical staff up to a competitive wage. Changes are both to the base rates and mileage with some additions to the itemized charges. These proposed rate changes are being brought to the Board of Supervisors for review and approval pursuant to Humboldt County Code section 551-6.

The wage increase for Dispatchers is an average of 31% over the wage increase period. Some Dispatchers may be slightly more or slightly less depending on the length of service.

The wage increase for EMTs is 16% over the wage increase period.

The wage increase for Paramedics is an average 27% over the wage increase period. Some paramedics may be slightly more or slightly less depending on the length of service.

The rate increase will also cover an increase of 15% in Paramedic Retention Bonuses and the salary of a full-time Clinical Supervisor.

City Ambulance is not requesting an increase for CPI increases or to offset increasing losses in Southern Humboldt. The entirety of these increases will go to employee wages as outlined above and in the financial mapping that was shared with Public Health Finance.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Private Revenues

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

The rate increase will not impact the county budget.

Over 90% of the payors are on fixed payment plans through Medi-Cal, Medicare, or other commercial contracts (insurance). Rate increases will affect less than 10% of the population as they pay individually and are not covered by private or public insurance.

With the proposed rate increases, City Ambulance will then be able to cover wage increases to dispatchers, EMTs, paramedics, and a full-time clinical supervisor.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board could choose not to authorize and approve this request; however this is not recommended. To do so would impact City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc's ability to maintain highly trained ambulance crews and cover increased operating costs.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc.'s rate increase request, with current and proposed ambulance rate schedules, dated January 25, 2024.

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: August 30, 2022

File No.: 22-1095