



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 8/30/2022

File #: 22-1095

To: Board of Supervisors

From: DHHS: Public Health

Agenda Section: Consent

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).

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Private Revenues

DISCUSSION:

County Code Title V - Health and Safety Division 5, Emergency Medical Services System, Section 551-6 Ambulance Service Rates requires that all rates of the schedule shall remain effective until any rate changes are amended or approved by the Board of Supervisors.

On May 9, 2022, City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. contacted the County Health Officer requesting a rate adjustment to their current fee schedule for Service Areas III and IV, which covers the Central-Eureka and South-Fortuna and Garberville Subzones in Humboldt County as defined in the County's Health and Safety Code, Title V, Emergency Medical Services System, Standards of Ambulance Equipment and Operations, Section 551-9 (c). The last request for a rate adjustment for these service areas was approved by your Board on Aug. 21, 2018. In August 2019 and again in April 2021, City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. submitted rate increase requests to Public Health but were unsuccessful in getting either request through the rate increase review process, which included review by the County Auditor-Controller's office after initial review by the County Health Officer. In June 2022, Public Health updated the internal policy and procedure to require reviews by the Humboldt County Health Officer and Public Health Fiscal.

For over 45 years, City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. has provided high quality emergency and non-emergency ambulance services to the residents and visitors of Eureka, the Eel Valley, Southern Humboldt, Southern Trinity and the rural most parts of the county.

City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. is requesting the increase with the intention of offsetting significant increases in employee wages in the face of outside competition and to cover other increased costs. City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. does not receive tax subsidies for providing emergency and non-emergency ambulance services and relies fully on fee for service.

This request was reviewed by the County Health Officer and supporting financial documentation was provided to Public Health Fiscal for analysis. Public Health Fiscal reviewed the detailed financial records pertaining to the ambulance services provided by City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. and supports the proposed rate increase.

Accordingly, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) - Public Health recommends that your Board approve the proposed rate increase. This will help to ensure that the highest level of emergency transportation service continues to be available for residents and visitors in Service Areas 3 and 4.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The request before your Board will increase City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc.'s Advance Life Support base rate for 911 calls from \$1,960 to \$2,650.00 for insurance and private pay clients. The proposed increase does not affect the reimbursement rate from Medi-Cal and Medicare. Reimbursements are provided directly to the City Ambulance of Eureka, Inc. There is no impact to the General Fund or the Public Health Fund.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by protecting vulnerable populations and providing community-appropriate levels of service.

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 May 9, 2022.

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: C-18
Meeting of: Aug. 21, 2018
File No.: 18-952