

May 10, 2022

Sofia Pereira, Director
Humboldt County Public Health
529 I Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Sofia,

Arcata-Mad River Ambulance is requesting approval by the county Board of Supervisors of a new rate schedule. This request was initially submitted in November of last year. It was approved by the Health Officer in his capacity as Ambulance Permit Officer, and forwarded to the auditor controller's office where no action has been taken. Our last rate increase was approved in 2019. Costs, in particular payroll costs, have increased significantly since that year. Our income is derived solely from fees for service as we receive no county subsidy.

Our units are staffed 24/7/365 by a minimum of one paramedic and an EMT. Due largely to the effects of the Covid pandemic's increased work demands, and the closure of many training programs, there is a severe shortage of qualified personnel across the country. We are fortunate in Humboldt County that we have been able to maintain full staffing. This is in large part due to the College of the Redwoods continuing to offer both EMT and paramedic programs, and our commitment to offering very competitive pay and benefits. With over 17,500 hours of payroll per crew per year, even small increases in hourly pay rates result in significant increased annual costs. We have increased the hourly pay of our Paramedics by 20%, and our EMT's by 29% since our last rate increase request. The recent inflation driven increases in the cost of fuel and supplies have added further to the need to raise our rates.

Ambulance services must respond to all requests for assistance without regard to the ability of the patient to pay. We charge a base rate designed to cover the costs of being staffed, equipped and available to respond to requests, and a per mile charge designed to cover the actual costs of responding to and treating and transporting a patient. The reimbursement received varies significantly depending on whether the patient is covered by health insurance, Medicare, Medi-Cal, or has no insurance. Regardless of the rate charged, the reimbursement rate from Medicare and Medi-Cal is fixed at a level that is below the cost of providing the service. Combined these two programs cover approximately 82% of our patients. Private health insurance covers less than 10% of our patients. The vast majority of patients without any form of healthcare coverage pay nothing. In the absence of an outside subsidy, all cost increases must be covered by less than 10% of our patients. This cost shifting requires that rates be raised substantially in order generate sufficient additional revenue to cover the increase in operating costs.

Rate Schedule

Rates - Arcata-Mad River Ambulance LLC

	Current rates	Proposed rates
ALS/BLS Base Rate for all emergency responses	\$2,088.00	2,650.00
Mileage – ALS/BLS per mile	38.50	40.00
Oxygen	80.00	100.00
Night Call 1900-0700	100.00	100.00
Basic Life Support (BLS) Non-Emergency Base Rate	600.00	1,100.00
Advanced Life Support (ALS)-2 Base Rate	2,360.00	3,000.00
Specialty Care Transport (SCT/CCT)**	3,000.00	3,800.00
Standby time per 15 minutes	60.00	80.00
Cardiac Monitor (incl. in base except for Medi-Cal)	50.00	50.00
Isolette	100.00	100.00
Spinal Immobilization	130.00	200.00
Extrication/Off Road Rescue	150.00	200.00
Emergency Response Fee without transport	250.00	250.00
Medical Disposables/Medications	at cost	at cost

* - ALS-2 refers to an emergency scene call where certain advanced procedures are utilized including defibrillation, interosseous infusion, transcutaneous pacing or the administration of three or more intravenous medications.

** - SCT/CCT refers to an inter-facility transport when the patient is intubated, is attended by an RN, is receiving medications by IV infusion, or a 12-lead EKG is performed.

Rates – Surrounding Areas

Company	ALS Base	BLS non-emergency	Mileage
Cal-Ore Life Flight*	\$2,740.00	\$1,195.00	\$49.00
Del Norte Ambulance*	2,031.00	1,326.00	46.80
City Ambulance(proposed)	2,650.00	1,100.00	40.00
Med Star Ukiah*	2,675.00	1,825.00	39.00
Trinity County Life Support*	2,400.00	1,500.00	40.00

* - These services operate in counties designated as super rural and therefore receive a higher reimbursement from Medicare than is received in Humboldt County of approximately \$100 per transport.

Hoopa Ambulance rates are not included because it receives a substantial subsidy from Humboldt County through Measure Z funding.

For 70 years, Arcata-Mad River Ambulance has provided high quality emergency and non-emergency ambulance services to the residents and visitors of north western Humboldt County. We receive no federal, state or county subsidy and rely completely on the revenue derived from our fees for service. Reimbursement rates from federal and states programs have not kept up with rising costs, and there has been a steady decline in the number of patients covered by commercial insurance programs. This rate increase is necessary to continue our ability to maintain our highly trained ambulance crews in the face of outside competition, and to cover our other increased costs. I hope it can be approved quickly.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doug Bolleau", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doug Bolleau, Director

Cc: Virginia Bass, Chair Board of Supervisors