



EMSAAC

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS'
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

January 25, 2008

Alameda
Central California
Coastal Valleys
Contra Costa
El Dorado
Imperial
Inland
Kern
Los Angeles
Marin
Merced
Monterey
Mountain-Valley
North Coast
Northern California
Orange
Riverside
Sacramento
San Benito
San Diego
San Francisco
San Joaquin
San Luis Obispo
San Mateo
Santa Barbara
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz
Sierra-Sac Valley
Solano
Tuolumne
Ventura

The Honorable Patty Berg, Chairperson
Health and Human Services
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: Budget Item 4120 - Emergency Medical Services Authority

Dear Assemblywoman Berg:

On behalf of the EMS Administrators Association of California (EMSAAC), we urge you to reject the proposed 10% reduction of \$242,000 for Regional Emergency Medical Services Agencies.

This General Fund reduction, coupled with the pre-existing 4% cut in place since 2001, will further weaken or jeopardize the seven regional EMS agencies in California that oversee the emergency medical services safety net in 66% of the State and 34 predominantly rural counties. Collectively, these regions carry out essential local EMS agency responsibilities for the second largest resident population in the State (6.68 million) and many millions of tourists.

The seven regions last received a state GF augmentation in 1999. Since then, operating costs have almost doubled, local fiscal match has increased by over 50% and workload has grown by 115%. Staff size, however, has decreased or remained stagnant (combined regional FTEs increased only 3.8% since 1999).

Additional revenue cuts will reduce the ability within much of California to maintain viable day-to-day and disaster EMS response systems. The seven EMS regions will be forced to further reduce services, staff size and travel. Essential EMS system checks and balances, such as: ambulance, base hospital and trauma center inspections; public, information and education activities; quality review and EMS system evaluation operations; training and continuing education program oversight; etc will be eliminated or minimized. Problems with responders that have received so much press attention recently will be exacerbated. Additional travel reductions will decrease regional participation

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in State and EMSAAC EMS system development activities, which in turn will reduce direct rural county influence within California.

Past state cuts to the EMS regions have been made up locally by fee and county share increases, federal and local grants, implementation of the Maddy Fund, etc. Federal grants and local revenue sources, however, have dried up. Regions receive little or no Homeland Security or disaster funding, and all local revenue sources (counties, ambulance services, hospitals) face state cuts as well. Further raising EMT certification fees most likely will decrease the number of EMTs, many of them volunteers, and in turn reduce the quality of pre-hospital responders. Finally, other new sources of state revenue (e.g., the new Pediatric Maddy Funding {AB 1773}) is scheduled to sunset in January 2009. Regions have few sources of revenue to turn to other than the State.

As the Legislature struggles with priority fiscal decisions like education or universal health care, or funding for programs for our children, elderly or homeless populations, it is important to emphasize that the EMS system is already available 365 days a year for everyone, regardless of age, sex, race or ability to pay who experiences a medical emergency. Further cutting the EMS regions, and our EMS system partners, simply erodes the day to day and disaster emergency safety net we have worked hard to improve for over 30 years.

The \$242,000 budget reduction will do little to balance the budget. The \$242,000 cut to regions will, however, create huge problems at the local level throughout most of the State.

We urge you reverse the proposed 10% state budget reduction to the seven EMS regions.

Sincerely,



EMSAAC President
Santa Clara County EMS Director

c: Connie Stewart, Senior Field Representative, Assemblywoman Patty Berg
Senator Pat Wiggins
Dan Smiley, Interim Director California EMSA
Regional EMS Administrators