

**Patterson EMS System**  
**Report to Del Puerto Health Care District Board**  
**June 5, 2017**

**Definitions:**

*Local EMS Agency:* Contracts with County to oversee all emergency medical services.

*Contractor:* Provider licensed to deliver emergency medical services and transportation. Contracts with Local EMS Agency.

*First Responder:* Fire departments recognized by the local EMS Agency (MVEMSA) as a first responder. May choose to sub-contract for supportive services from the local Provider/Contractor

**MOUNTAIN VALLEY EMS AGENCY**

Patterson District Ambulance (MVEMSA Contractor), Patterson Fire Department (PDA subcontractor), and the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District (PDA subcontractor) are the core elements of the EMS system in the City and broader community of Patterson. Division 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code (Sections 1797 – 1799) establishes the State EMS Authority and local EMS Agencies, typically at the county level and occasionally at the regional level. Stanislaus County is a member of a five-county regional EMS agency known as Mountain-Valley EMS Agency (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Stanislaus). Stanislaus County has designated MVEMSA as the local EMS Agency.

Title 22 California Code of Regulations Section 100167(b)(4) requires paramedic service providers to have a written agreement with the local EMS Agency to provide advanced life support service. Patterson District Ambulance entered into the current County of Stanislaus Rural Ambulance Agreement was executed on May 1, 2013 for a five-year term expiring on April 30, 2018. This agreement confirms the Exclusive Operating Area (EOA) for Zone 5 which includes the City of Patterson. This agreement also establishes numerous requirements for providers including requirements for providers to establish first responder relationships and subcontracts:

8.1 Relationships and Accountability (Page 43/44)

A. First Responder Relationships

1. Contractor shall support the development and integration of the fire first response component of the EMS System and shall cooperate with the expansion of ALS fire first response.
2. Contractor shall ensure that its personnel work professionally and collaboratively with the fire first responders in the transition of patient care at the scene.

B. Subcontracts

1. Contractor is responsible for the comprehensive services necessary for medical emergency response and transport. To the extent supportive services are desired from others such as fire entities in order to provide medical response and transport, written subcontracts must be entered into advance and requires prior approval of the Agency Contract

Administrator. At no time, however, would response by an entity other than Contractor satisfy the response time requirement.

## **RELATIONSHIP AND INTERACTION WITH PATTERSON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Del Puerto Health Care District/Patterson District Ambulance entered into a subcontract with Patterson Fire Department and West Stanislaus Fire District on December 1, 2013. Subsequent to this agreement, the Patterson Fire Department expressed the desire to expand their level of first responder EMS service to include Advanced Life Support (ALS). Consistent with the Rural Ambulance Provider Agreement, Patterson District Ambulance worked collaboratively to address all the logistical elements necessary to support Patterson Fire Department First Responder ALS or FRALS program. These efforts yielded a collaborative services agreement between Del Puerto Health Care District/Patterson District Ambulance and the City of Patterson/Fire Department that further defined the working relationship and responsibilities of both entities in the expanded ALS partnership. These efforts culminated with Patterson Fire Department beginning first responder ALS service on April 1, 2016.

### DPHCD Medical Director Liability

A particularly challenging element of the enhanced ALS partnership was insurance coverage and medical liability insurance coverage for Dr. Rodriguez as the medical director for the ALS partnership – Patterson District Ambulance and Patterson Fire Department. There was thorough review of the statutory and contractual elements that established the basis for the partnership. Eventually, Beta and District legal counsel concluded that the District's existing medical liability insurance provided full coverage to Dr. Rodriguez in his medical director role. It should be noted that Dr. Rodriguez is not the treating physician in any ALS patient relationship. Paramedics render ALS treatment under standing orders from the MVEMSA Medical Director, Dr. Kevin Mackey, or the base hospital emergency room physician. Both the City and the District name each other as additionally insured in all insurances except workers' compensation insurance.

### Medical Equipment, Supplies, and Medications

The initial startup of the fire department first responder ALS program required the City to purchase all the required ALS equipment and medications required by MVEMSA Policy 409.00 "Limited Advanced Life Support (LALS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) First Responder Unit Supply and Medical Supply Inventory". The full cost of the startup – equipment, supplies, and medications – was paid by the City of Patterson. The fire department paid particular attention to detail in selecting ALS equipment, supplies, and medications identical, or nearly identical, to those items in use by Patterson District Ambulance so that paramedics can easily function with any treatment items in the most critical of emergency incidents.

### Resupply

Day to day operations are unpredictable. Sometimes a Patterson District Ambulance (PDA) ALS unit arrives at a medical emergency first, other times a Patterson Fire Department (PFD) ALS unit arrives first, and still other times units arrive near simultaneously. If a PFD unit arrives first, they begin rendering care and using medical supplies as necessary. When the PDA unit arrives on-scene to transport the patient and assist with care, we typically resupply the fire ALS unit from inventory on the ambulance. Had the PDA unit arrived on-scene first, the medical supplies used would have been provided by the ambulance crew. This represents a zero-sum gain in the vast majority of incidents. There are occasional incidents where a fire unit may respond with a non-PDA unit and the non-PDA unit is unable to resupply them. In these circumstances, the alternate ambulance provider is providing mutual aid to PDA. PDA is, therefore, responsible to ensure that the fire unit is resupplied. In situations where a PDA unit is unable to fully resupply the PFD unit, or another ambulance provider is unable to restock the PFD unit, the fire crew will resupply from the PDA station. Due to the varied methods to resupply, we do not specifically track fire

department resupply. It should be noted that City of Patterson/ Fire Department is responsible to replace their expired medications and supplies. As a benefit, outdated medications and supplies are used for training activities.

#### Equipment

As part of the excellent interagency cooperation in support of ALS service in the Patterson community, both agencies loan equipment as needed in the event a frontline piece of equipment becomes unavailable for whatever reason. These are temporary situations and reduce the need for either agency to purchase additional spare equipment solely for this purpose.

#### Fire Supply Costs to PDA

I believe there has been a minimal increase in PDA medical supply consumption as a result of the Patterson Fire first responder ALS program (begun April 1, 2016) while there has been a tremendous enhancement to the depth of advanced life support care available to the citizens of Patterson.

All Stanislaus County ALS providers must participate fully in the various EMS system committees and work group meetings. In Stanislaus County, there are a number of such meetings that I attend on a regular basis:

#### County

- EMS Committee (bi-monthly)
- System Status (monthly)
- Dispatch Governance (monthly)
- Stanislaus Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Council (bi-monthly)
- Regional STEMI Meeting (quarterly)
- Regional STROKE Meeting (quarterly)

#### Hospital Level

- Doctors Medical Center STEMI Meeting and Case Review (monthly)
- Emanuel Medical Center STEMI Meeting and Case Review (monthly)
- Memorial Medical Center STEMI Meeting and Case Review (monthly)
- Trauma Advisory Council (quarterly)

#### Local

- Quality Improvement Group (bi-monthly)

#### Training

In addition to the above meetings, MVEMSA requires participation in training initiatives, special situation/event planning, treatment protocol updates, Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) reviews, and other area training or disaster preparedness events. There was an active shooter table top exercise planned for this month in Patterson that has been postponed. Additionally, I was on a conference call today for Transport Guidance for High Risk Patients presented by the MVEMSA executive director to meet a grant funded deliverable requirement. Another scheduled training session is titled "Transition from a Multi-Casualty Incident to a Disaster Level Response". These types of training initiatives are common.

#### Quality Assurance Quality Improvement

Patterson District Ambulance's contract with MVEMSA requires having a QA/QI plan specific to our in-house processes for quality assurance for medical care and ongoing quality improvement initiatives to ensure treatment protocol compliance and delivery of the highest quality of EMS care and treatment. The plan must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. The plan is filed with MVEMSA and ultimately the State EMS Authority. The program requires a person designated as the quality improvement coordinator to run the QA/QI program. There

are seventeen State core measures that a QI program must review and report. This is separate and distinct from any MVEMSA or provider QI measures.

It should be noted that all the above system participation and meeting requirements existed for Patterson District Ambulance prior to the Patterson Fire first responder ALS program, and continue to date.

#### **EMS Meetings - Patterson Fire and Patterson District Ambulance**

Patterson District Ambulance provides clinical oversight for the Patterson Fire first responder ALS program. Both agencies collaboratively participate in State of California and MVEMSA mandated Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement programs. This represents efficiencies on several levels including increasing the depth of paramedics available to assist with patient care report review.

PDA and PFD personnel meet monthly for the specific purpose of quality improvement and to facilitate a command level problem solving forum for day-to-day incident interaction between personnel. Jake Schulke and I represent PDA, while Division Chief Don Armario, Casey Zenger, and David Hohl represent PFD. These meetings are very productive. *NOTE: I am not aware of any prohibitions against board members attending a quality improvement meeting with fire personnel. Board members observing a clinical care quality improvement meeting must have a current signed non-disclosure agreement on file.*

#### **INTERAGENCY PLANNING**

Board members will recall a standing committee of two board members and the Director of Ambulance Services, intended to meet with fire department personnel for interagency projects and planning. Committee members and fire representatives did not meet for an extended period of time due to several Patterson Fire Chief changes. Division Chief Jeff Gregory officially became the new Patterson fire chief on September 21, 2016 and a meeting finally occurred. Dr. Steve Pittson and Harold Hill met with Chief Gregory, Division Chief Don Armario, and me earlier this year. The meeting was relatively short as no significant projects or issues were presented by either party. Committee members indicated their preference to meet at least annually.

#### **OTHER AGENCIES**

The Patterson EMS system extends beyond Patterson District Ambulance, the City of Patterson/Fire Department, and the West Stanislaus Fire Protection District. We interact with other fire first responder agencies including Cal Fire, Mountain View, Westport, and Woodland. PDA provides first responder training and support to these agencies. We collaborate with West Side Ambulance management to provide operational support and joint training opportunities when possible. We have good communication and work relationships with all the agencies that we partner with to provide the best EMS prehospital care.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Patterson District Ambulance depends on partnerships with fire first responder agencies and neighboring ambulance providers to provide optimal EMS service. Patterson Fire Department's implementation of ALS first response increased the available paramedic resources for the Patterson community and makes a difference every day. While we may have experienced small increases in costs of consumable medical supplies due to the new ALS relationship with Patterson Fire, the expanded ALS resource has significantly benefited the community. Our greatest strength as an EMS system is the collaborative effort of all providers to expand training opportunities and maintain a constant readiness to serve the citizens of Patterson and the west side of Stanislaus County.