

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: December 7, 2022

To: Ventura County EMS System Stakeholders

From: Steve Carroll, Paramedic  
EMS AdministratorDaniel Shepherd, MD  
Medical Director  


Re: Ambulance Contract Update

The Ventura County Emergency Medical Services Agency oversees the provision of ambulance services for the entire County. Ventura County currently has seven (7) exclusive operating areas (EOAs), with contracted ambulances provided by American Medical Response (AMR) Ambulance Service and Gold Coast Ambulance, an AMR affiliate. The current ambulance providers have been “grandfathered” into EOAs pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 1797.224. This “grandfather” section provides that no competitive bidding process is required if the LEMSA continues the use of existing providers operating in the manner and scope in which the services have been provided without interruption since January 1, 1981. While the EOA boundaries have stayed the same over the years, the ambulance contracts have been renegotiated to provide system enhancements and to ensure delivery of quality care to our system’s patients. The term of the current contracts is July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024, with options for two one-year extensions to June 30, 2026.

Ventura County EMS has maintained successful partnerships with our local private ambulance providers for over four decades. Nonetheless, the ambulance industry has changed rapidly in recent years and ambulance providers are continuing to experience shortages of licensed paramedic personnel, largely caused by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 26, 2022, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors directed that prospective contracts for emergency ground ambulance transport and related medical services be awarded through a competitive bidding process, also known as a request for proposal (RFP) process. Ventura County EMS is currently working to procure the services of a consultant to assist with formulating the draft and scope of the appropriate RFP, which may include redefining the EOAs and structure of service delivery. The goal is to conduct a successful RFP which will select a contractor or contractors to provide an efficient, reliable, and sustainable EMS system that focuses on quality of care and clinical proficiency. Current contracts may be extended as necessary, after July 1, 2024, depending on the length of time needed to complete the RFP process and for any necessary transition of services.

While our current ambulance system is successful and contractually compliant, we feel the RFP provides us with an opportunity to improve systems of care and to foster a responsive and sustainable ambulance transport system. No specific details on the design of our future ambulance system have been decided yet. Future updates on the RFP process will be posted on the EMS Agency website at [www.vchca.org/ems](http://www.vchca.org/ems).