

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 22, 2012

TO: Supervisor Peggy Romo West, Chairperson, Health and Human Needs Committee

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health & Human Services
Prepared by: Paula Lucey, Administrator, Behavioral Health Division

SUBJECT: **Informational Report From the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Submitting a Status Report on Changes in the Emergency Medical Services Educational Service Delivery and Resulting Efficiencies**

Issue

As part of the 2012 Budget, the Director of the Milwaukee County Emergency Medical Services (MC EMS) program was directed to “work with participating municipalities to provide opportunities for on-shift initial paramedic training and in-station continuing education, which would help municipal partners reduce overtime costs resulting from sending employees to the Milwaukee County EMS Education Center to attend EMS classes.”

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Administrator of the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) are returning to the Board with a status update on this change in educational service delivery and the efficiencies that have been achieved.

Background

The Director for MC EMS and the EMS faculty have met five times since January 2012 to discuss options and educational delivery models that would meet the educational and financial needs of the contracting fire departments while remaining compliant with local, state and national requirements/mandates. Input was provided by the fire departments (FD) and it was decided that the educational needs of the FD would be prioritized in the following manner:

1. Seek options to deliver continuing education (refresher class) content in a non-traditional face-to-face classroom manner which students have historically attended off duty;
2. Seek alternatives to the three times a year continuing education conferences; and
3. Seek alternatives to the full-time, forty hours per week initial paramedic class.

Refresher Class

The staff of MC EMS and the fire department representatives worked in close collaboration and divided the traditional six hour refresher class, offered twenty times each semester, into two classes that were three hours in length. In total for the Spring 2012 refresher class schedule, MC EMS offered 44 classes. This allowed the FD more flexibility to send staff on-duty, while allowing students to be away from their fire department stations for a shorter period of time. Additionally, the decision to offer classes at two sites allowed fire department paramedic units to be closer to their communities and leave class to respond to 911 calls should the need arise. Classes were held at the West Allis Fire Department at 73rd and National and at the Oak Creek Fire Department at 13th and Putez.

Three hundred and eighty (380) paramedics from nine fire departments attended the Spring 2012 refresher classes. Suburban fire departments experienced an overtime savings of \$70,060 and the City of Milwaukee Fire Department experienced an overtime savings of \$32,040. In total, as a result of changing the model of offering refresher classes on-duty, Milwaukee County EMS saved contracting fire departments \$102,100 in overtime.

Continuing Education Conferences

MC EMS and the FD have discussed decreasing the frequency of the continuing education (CE) conferences from the three-hour conferences that are currently offered three times a year, for a total of nine hours per year. An alternative would be to offer two - two hour classes for a total of four hours per year. This would save the FD five hours of overtime per paramedic per year, likely resulting in an additional \$85,000 in total overtime savings annually.

Core Paramedic Class

MC EMS staff held several meetings with municipal fire department staff to address changing the model for the core paramedic class. MC EMS staff prepared three options, and the fire departments' administration evaluated the presented options and selected a "shift model." The shift model will deliver the core paramedic class on-duty for two fire department shifts. This model, while extending the length of a core paramedic class by five to six months, will allow fire departments to send staff on-duty, decreasing overtime significantly. The specifics of this model are currently being developed so estimates of costs savings are not available at this time.

Next Steps

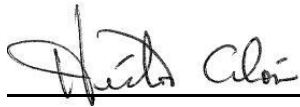
MC EMS Education Center is in the early stages of using an Internet based WebEx platform to offer classes remotely. WebEx is a "Go-To-Meeting" type platform that will allow content to be delivered from a single location by MC EMS staff and be viewed remotely by fire department staff. For the Fall 2012 Refresher Class, MC EMS will deliver each class to 8-10 fire department locations (versus the two locations used for the Spring 2012 Refresher classes) using the WebEx platform. This will allow MC EMS to use fewer resources to deliver content to more fire

department paramedics per class. Additionally, the use of the WebEx platform for the Fall 2012 Refresher Classes will provide MC EMS and municipal fire department staff with experience and opportunities to transition to delivering education remotely, while putting in place policies and operational processes to support a video conferencing system.

To efficiently and effectively deploy MC EMS human resources and to provide high quality education to contracting municipal fire department staff, a video conferencing system needs to be developed. This system will require IMSD and EMS to work with municipal fire departments on establishing video conferencing capabilities. Such a system will greatly improve the quality of delivery of EMS education while reducing salary costs. BHD has included a request for an initial investment in video conferencing resources for EMS in its 2013 Capital Budget.

Recommendation

This is an informational report. No action is necessary.



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health & Human Services

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