

APPROVED
Board of Supervisors
by Reso No 2024-0123
FEB 27 2024
By Florence Jones
Clerk of the Board

**COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

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For the Agenda of:
February 27, 2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Through: David Villanueva, County Executive
Chevon Kothari, Deputy County Executive, Social Services

From: Timothy W. Lutz, Director, Health Services

Subject: Approve Sacramento County Ground Ambulance Providers' Rates Consistent With California Health And Safety Code Section 1371.56 And Sacramento County Emergency Medical Services Agency Policies; And Authorize The Director Of The Department Of Health Services To Increase Rates Automatically In An Amount Equal To The Ambulance Inflation Factor Established And Published Annually By The Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services, Establish And Approve Rates For New Services For Existing Providers, And Establish And Approve Rates For Newly Designated Ground Ambulance Providers

District(s): All

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Adopt the attached resolution:

1. Approving Sacramento County ground ambulance providers' rates consistent with California Health and Safety Code Section 1371.56 and Sacramento County Emergency Medical Services Agency (SCEMSA) Policies, and
2. Authorizing the Director of the Department of Health Services (DHS), or designee, to increase rates automatically in an amount equal to the Ambulance Inflation Factor established and published annually by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, establish and approve rates for new services for existing providers, and establish and approve rates for newly designated ground ambulance providers.

BACKGROUND

On January 1, 2024, a newly enacted consumer protection law, codified in Section 1371.56 of the California Health and Safety Code became effective. The law prohibits "balance billing" which, in this context, is defined as billing an individual patient for the difference between the amount charged by the ground ambulance provider and the amount paid by the individual patient's health care service plan.

Approve Sacramento County Ground Ambulance Providers' Rates Consistent With California Health And Safety Code Section 1371.56 And Sacramento County Emergency Medical Services Policies; And Authorize The Director Of The Department Of Health Services To Increase Rates Automatically In An Amount Equal To The Ambulance Inflation Factor Established And Published Annually By The Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services, Establish And Approve Rates For New Services For Existing Providers, And Establish And Approve Rates For Newly Designated Ground Ambulance Providers

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In application, the law prohibits noncontracting ground ambulance providers from billing patients "out-of-network" service charges. A noncontracting ground ambulance provider is a ground ambulance provider that is not contracted with a particular health care service plan. Contracting between ground ambulance providers and individual healthcare plans is not an industry standard. In Sacramento County, ground ambulance providers are considered noncontracting ground ambulance providers in almost all circumstances.

Per the new law, a noncontracting ambulance provider may only charge an individual patient the same cost-sharing amount that the patient would pay for the same covered services received from a contracting (in-network) ground ambulance provider. As a result, this "balance billing" law ensures that individual patients will no longer be burdened with the possibility of incurring unexpectedly high ambulance bills.

An unintended consequence of the new legislation is that ground ambulance providers may struggle to recoup charges from health care service plans for medical services that exceed the in-network cost-sharing amount. The new balance billing law recognized this possible discrepancy and, in an attempt to prevent potential losses to ground ambulance providers, it includes Health and Safety Code Section 1371.56(d)(1)(A), which ensures that these providers are adequately reimbursed by the patient's health care service plan.

Health and Safety Code Section 1371.56(d)(1)(A) permits local governing bodies to establish fixed rates for ground ambulance services that may exceed the in-network cost-sharing amount, the difference of which the health care service plan shall be responsible for directly reimbursing to the noncontracting ambulance providers. Without established/approved ground ambulance provider rates, it is anticipated that the reimbursement received for these vital services will be significantly lower than the current ground ambulance reimbursement rates. This is likely to create significant financial sustainability issues with all SCEMSA approved ground ambulance providers. As fewer ambulance providers can afford to operate in Sacramento County, SCEMSA revenues will decrease due to lost provider fees, permit fees, etc.

In accordance with this provision, SCEMSA collected and compiled into the attached schedule of rates, current ground ambulance rates from designated

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Sacramento County providers. As noted in the statute, these established/fixed rates shall be adjusted annually by an amount equal to the Ambulance Inflation Factor published by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The Board of Supervisors' approval of the schedule of fixed rates will ensure that noncontracting ground ambulance providers receive sustainable reimbursement for ground ambulance services provided, while still preserving the robust consumer safeguards that have been instituted in California Health and Safety Code Section 1371.56.

71-J Analysis

Fee schedules are not subject to Sacramento County Charter Section 71-J.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

There is no impact to the County General Fund. Failure to approve the attached resolution will have a negative fiscal impact on Sacramento County ground ambulance providers by not ensuring that they are adequately reimbursed for services rendered. The financial losses will threaten ground ambulance providers' ability to operate and maintain their SCEMSA designations. As fewer ground ambulance providers operate in Sacramento County, SCEMSA revenues will decrease due to lost provider and permit fees.

Attachments:

RES – EMS Ambulance Rates

ATT 1 – Ambulance Schedule of Fees

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-0123

APPROVE SACRAMENTO COUNTY GROUND AMBULANCE PROVIDERS' RATES CONSISTENT WITH CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 1371.56 AND SACRAMENTO COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY POLICIES; AND AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES TO INCREASE RATES AUTOMATICALLY IN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE AMBULANCE INFLATION FACTOR ESTABLISHED AND PUBLISHED ANNUALLY BY THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES, ESTABLISH AND APPROVE RATES FOR NEW SERVICES FOR EXISTING PROVIDERS, AND ESTABLISH AND APPROVE RATES FOR NEWLY DESIGNATED GROUND AMBULANCE PROVIDERS

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors, on behalf of the COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO, a political subdivision of the State of California, hereby approve Sacramento County ground ambulance providers' rates consistent with California Health and Safety Code Section 1371.56 and Sacramento County Emergency Medical Services Agency Policies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of the Department of Health Services, or designee, on behalf of the COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO, a political subdivision of the State of California, be and is hereby authorized to increase rates automatically in an amount equal to the Ambulance Inflation Factor established and published annually by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, establish and approve rates for new services for existing providers, and establish and approve rates for newly designated ground ambulance providers.

Approve Sacramento County Ground Ambulance Providers' Rates Consistent With California Health And Safety Code Section 1371.56 And Sacramento County Emergency Medical Services Policies; And Authorize The Director Of The Department Of Health Services To Increase Rates Automatically In An Amount Equal To The Ambulance Inflation Factor Established And Published Annually By The Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services, Establish And Approve Rates For New Services For Existing Providers, And Establish And Approve Rates For Newly Designated Ground Ambulance Providers
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On a motion by Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Serna, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento this 27th day of February, 2024, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Supervisors Desmond, Frost, Hume, Serna, Kennedy

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RECUSAL: None.
(PER POLITICAL REFORM ACT (§ 18702.5.))

Pat O'Rourke

Chair of the Board of Supervisors
of Sacramento County, California

FILED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FEB 27 2024

Florence Evans
Clerk of the Board



ATTEST: *Florence Evans*
Clerk, Board of Supervisors

In accordance with Section 25103 of the Government Code of the State of California a copy of the document has been delivered to the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, County of Sacramento on Feb 27, 2024

By: *[Signature]*
Deputy Clerk, Board of Supervisors

Sacramento County EMS Agency - Maximum Approved Ground Ambulance Provider Rates

Provider	ALS Base	BLS Base	LALS Base	CCT Base	Mileage (Per Mile)	Oxygen	Night Charge	Extra Attendant (Per Hour)	Miscellaneous
Alpha One Ambulance Medical Services	\$3,960.00	\$2,772.00	N/A	\$16,500.00	\$54.00	\$180.00	\$210.00	N/A	Neonatal Base: \$2,640.00 / EKG: \$156.00 / Bariatric Fee: \$900.00
AMR Sacramento County	\$3,854.13	\$3,016.41	N/A	\$12,370.32	\$83.77	\$252.94	\$371.94	\$505.92	Neonatal Base: \$12,370.32 / EKG: \$252.94 / Bariatric Fee: \$743.90 / Extra attendant not broken down by hour
AmWest Ambulance	\$3,976.00	\$3,500.00	N/A	\$8,750.00	\$63.00	\$275.00	N/A	N/A	Neonatal Base: \$8,750.00/ Dry Run Fee: \$450.00
Bay Medic Transportation	\$3,615.00	\$2,900.00	N/A	\$9,975.00	\$72.00	\$115.00	N/A	\$365.00	Neonatal - Peditric ICU Base: \$10,975.00 / Ventilator - \$775.00 / Extra attendant not broken down by hour
Cosumnes CSD Fire Department	\$2,158.00	\$2,158.00	N/A	N/A	\$38.00	\$143.00	\$67.00	N/A	Supplies: ALS-1; \$72 / ALS-2; \$120 / BLS; \$51 - list of supplies not broken down.
Folsom City Fire Department	\$2,158.00	\$2,158.00	\$2,158.00	N/A	\$39.00	\$165.00	N/A	N/A	First Responder Patient Assessment_Treatment-No Transport \$425.00 / Cardiac Monitor_Defibrillator \$168.00 / Advanced Life Surrport Supplies \$105.00 / Continuous Positive Airway Pressure \$225.00 / Bone Drill \$305.00
Medic Ambulance Service	\$2,614.28	\$2,614.28	N/A	\$6,850.00	\$53.00	\$119.10	\$125.06	\$619.02	EKG Monitor: \$436.40 / Bariatric Maintenance: \$987.51 / Neo Natal Base Rate: \$3,212.70 / EZ IO \$1,112.15
NorCal Ambulance	\$5,465.00	\$4,600.00	N/A	\$14,500.00	\$75.00	\$250.00	N/A	N/A	Neonatal ICU Base: \$14,500.00 / Bariatric Fee: \$400.00
ProTransport-1	\$5,036.41	\$3,287.31	N/A	\$12,659.95	\$70.80	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Trauma Life Care Medical Transport, Inc. Transportation	N/A	\$1,500.00	N/A	\$3,500.00	\$25.00	\$200.00	\$350.00	\$35.00	Use of medical equipment/devices are variable
Sacramento City Fire Department	\$2,059.35	\$1,839.06	N/A	N/A	\$37.75	\$157.28	\$115.47	N/A	First Responder Fee: \$319.11 / EKG: \$181.86 / CPAP: \$212.92
Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District	\$2,780.00	\$2,780.00	N/A	N/A	\$50.00	\$178.00	\$158.00	N/A	First Responder Fee_Assessment at Scene: \$500.00 / Cardiac Monitor: \$138.00

Acronym	Short For
ALS	Advanced Life Support
BLS	Basic Life Support
LALS	Limited Advanced Life Support
CCT	Critical Care Transport