

Gage County EMS Assessment Committee

May 8, 2008 Meeting Minutes

(1)—The meeting was called to order by Don Harmon, Committee Chair

(2)—Approval of this meeting’s agenda and the April 10 meeting minutes

(3)—*Legal Implications of Ambulance Districts*: Randall Ritnour, Gage County Attorney, briefed the Committee on a letter he sent to Rex Adams, Chairman, Gage County Board of Supervisors, regarding Establishment of County-Wide Emergency Medical Service (EMS). Mr. Ritnour invited Committee members to forward inquiries/questions/requests for legal opinions to him for response. It was agreed that Committee members would channel this communication to Mr. Ritnour through Robyn Henderson.

Regarding (2) on page 2 of this letter (“May the levy for the ambulance district exceed the fifty cent lid”): Mr. Ritnour stated that the status of statutory authority for this is pending an Attorney General opinion. However, it was Mr. Ritnour’s sense that the fifty cent lid may not be exceeded.

(4)—*Reports from Subcommittees*:

- **Finance Subcommittee**: (Rex Adams, Alan Fetty, Dan Hawkins and Jane Ford Witthoff) Presented by Alan Fetty as follows

Report
05-08-08

The Subcommittee met twice and discussed two dimensions relative to financing. The first included operational strategies to reduce expenses for the overall emergency medical service system. The second involved financing mechanisms. We did not have information about present expenditures for emergency medical services, the application of lid limits, the nature of expenditures and revenue and activity information so we were hampered in our progress.

Operational strategies:

The consolidation of billing

This would be done by one entity or through one contract. Billing appears to be a major source of revenue for the services provided. We do not know how billing is handled by the various entities serving the County.

Medical direction from one source

This could be a shared position with the hospital or within the County. There may be cost savings in the long run but it may cost more in the short run because of the work that needs to be done at the start. Unified medical direction would improve quality of services, build the health care capacity within the County and indirectly conserve resources and save money.

Shared purchasing

This may already be occurring to some extent through organizations which offer this to their membership. However, there may be added cost savings if purchasing is consolidated for emergency health services in Gage County. This could be established as a cooperative.

Staff support for a county wide coordinating entity

Presently a lot is asked of Mark Meints and others to address coordination issues. This results in indirect expenses to all involved and results in some inefficiency. Again, this is an area where an upfront expenditure may be needed for long term benefit.

Continued support and investment in county-wide 911 and communication system

Financing mechanisms:

Local government

While it was generally agreed that local governments needs to support emergency medical services, concerns existed about levy limits and the balance of control and financing.

Hospital District

This is an option available for the provision of services including emergency medical services. The concerns mentioned above would continue. There is a question about whether county levy limits would apply to this and the mechanism for balancing finance and control would need to be addressed. The establishment of this would require a vote of the people and the cooperation of the hospital and other parties. How Districts are used varies but one example is that Larimer CO EMS agencies operate in relation to a hospital district. Medical direction/ coordination comes Poudre Valley Hospital.

Contract with hospital to coordinate county wide services

The authority to do this would need to be explored and would require the commitment of the hospital and other entities, of course. Again, hospital based services vary by funding and structure but an example is the model used in Riley County KS where the EMS is owned by the County but operated by Mercy Regional Medical Center.

Rural health center

This is a mechanism for the delivery of outpatient services. There do not appear to be advantages to this as a means of financing and providing emergency medical services.

Rural and suburban fire district

This mechanism involves the same concerns mentioned previously relative to lid questions. This alternative may be a more difficult mechanism through which to provide a unified system and allow for costs savings mentioned earlier.

Note:

Other Funding

Time limited funding is available from a variety of sources including the Rural Emergency Responders Initiative through USDA. Public and non-profit entities are eligible for financing for needed equipment and services.

- **Structure Subcommittee:** PowerPoint presentation delivered by Brian Daake

It was agreed that this presentation was rich in valuable demographic and other information.

- **Quality Subcommittee:** Presented by Gary Williams

Draft Mission Statement on Quality

The Emergency Medical Services of Gage County is dedicated to the utilization of a comprehensive system of principles, methods, and techniques to systematically measure and improve processes resulting in superior patient care outcomes.

Draft Quality Subcommittee Goals

- (1) Establish EMS Medical Director Job Description detailing Role & Responsibilities compliant with NE State Regulations by June 30, 2008.
- (2) Compile a listing of provider in-services underway & identify a prioritized listing of competency based training programs.
- (3) Identify methodology for integration of a data driven Competency Based Education & Quality Improvement Program utilizing the E-NARSIS System.
- (4) Identify process to improve resource awareness & utilization by EMS Providers.
- (5)—*Develop outline of report to the Board on May 21*

Don Harmon will present findings to date to the Gage County Board of Supervisors.