

Gage County EMS Advisory Committee
Beatrice, NE
June 12, 2008

Present:

Don Harmon
Alan Fetty
Jane Ford-Witthoff
Dee Fritch
Ron Miller
Rex Adams
Mark Meints

Staff:

Robyn Henderson
Dean Cole
Richard Mettner

Minutes

Don asked that any correction to the minutes be forwarded to Robyn.

Board of Supervisors Presentation

Don provided a copy of the handout he shared with the Board.

- Demographics – Gage County older than state average

Wymore Fire and Rescue

- Wymore numbers are high for calls
 - Is there duplication between Beatrice and Wymore calls because both are dispatched for some calls?
 - A unified medical director system will help resolve some of the concerns with Wymore.
 - Don will arrange a meeting with Wymore F/R, Beatrice F/R, and Mayors of both towns.
 - Wymore is considering hiring an EMT.
 - Mark has authority to change district lines affecting Holmesville, Wymore, Odell, Diller, Beatrice. Committee agrees that Mark should go ahead and do this.

Subcommittee Reports

Finance: Is performance-based payment a realistic option instead of pay per call? Rex Adams said that the county has looked at that and likes the option, but not sure how to implement it.

All squads need to collect on charges; send to collections if needed.

Rural Fire money (3 cent levy/tax dollars) can't be used for "EMS rescue." It was asked to have the county attorney provide input on this. Is this a state law? Jane Ford-Witthoff and Rex Adams will talk with Randy Ritnour.

Money for EMS is included in county budget (comes out of property tax levy- 2%), but distribution needs to be reevaluated. Budget will be set in August. To change contracts with departments, the county needs to give 90-days notice and hold a public hearing.

Alan Fetty said the system isn't working. City doesn't have as strong of interest in EMS issues because they don't put money into it. Payment system needs to be changed.

Wymore may have to go to a paid instead of volunteer system.

Issues that have come up:

- Don't know what services we want – can't define budget until know what services we want to provide.
 - Purchasing
 - Coordination - supplies
 - Billing
 - Medical Director
 - Equipment
 - personnel
- Current tax system creates inequality – need an equitable tax system to generate appropriate revenue for all EMS districts

Structure:

Issues that have come up:

- Review service districts
- Protocols for tiering
- Use data to determine appropriation placement of services (system status dispatch - high need position)
- Accountability in the health care business.
- Roving paramedic/rural health clinics
- Who makes decisions with multiple entities involved? Allow autonomy but within a structure.

Quality:

Issues that have come up::

- Unified Physician Medical Director (PMD)/accountability
- Quality Improvement System
- Training
- Recruitment

How many people would be needed to make decisions (has authority)?

Surge Conference: needs have been identified, now have to determine what changes need to be made to accomplish recommendations. Need to have the “decision makers” in the room who have authority to approve.

The person that has authority in EMS system is the Medical Director. Mark Meints noted that Dr. Studley is quite busy in his new position. Can we hire/contract with someone to come in and help resolve issues? Rex stated that it can be done by using county money that goes to EMS to pay for this

position. County is authority that villages/towns have to “obey,” so if PMD is “hired” by county, districts can’t ignore them.

Rex said that the County Board needs a written appeal from the Committee requesting that County put a PMD into its budget for next fiscal year. Salary line: \$45,000. Can come from EMS budget and reduce contracts equally to pay for the salary, but Rex would like to find “new” money to pay for it.

Motion made and seconded to submit request to County for funded PMD in the budget. Motion approved by consensus.

Don, Jane, and Robyn will work on letter to County Board requesting funding for the PMD position and that it be funded by new county funds, not from existing district contracts. The County budget is for one year, so funding will need to be requested each year. Don will attend next County Board meeting to help answer questions. Next meeting of Board is on Wednesday, June 18 (every two weeks).

Agenda for next meeting will focus on follow up from this letter.

Next meeting is July 10.

LETTER TO GAGE COUNTY BOARD

Gage County EMS Advisory Committee
c/o Southeast Nebraska AHEC
5109 West Scott Road, #408
Beatrice, NE 68310
June 12, 2008

Rex Adams
Chair
Gage County Board of Supervisors
612 Grant Street
Beatrice, NE 68310

Dear Rex:

The Gage County EMS Advisory Committee requests that \$45,000 be added to the Gage County budget for fiscal year 2008-2009 to hire a Physician Medical Director that will provide direction and assistance to all EMS services within the county.

As you know, Gage County's primary concern has been ensuring high quality emergency medical services to all residents of Gage County. One of the recommendations contained in the Board-requested EMS Assessment that was done last year is to fund a single, part-time EMS Physician Medical Director to provide medical direction county-wide, and to develop a medical supervision plan.

The EMS Advisory Committee has determined that a single medical director was the number one priority and the first step needed to improve EMS services county-wide. The Medical Director, through the medical supervision plan, would develop evidence-based standards of care for ambulance services and quick-response providers in the county. These standards could be considered in the development of a performance-based reimbursement system.

As you know, high quality EMS services are important to support the growth and vitality of the county. Consequently, it is vital that the County continue, at a minimum, its current level of financial support for emergency medical services in addition to funding the Medical Director position.

We appreciate your continuing support for quality emergency medical services.

Sincerely,



Don Harmon, Chair
Gage County EMS Advisory Committee