



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY Public Health Division Emergency Medical Services

1800 Green Hills Road, Suite 240
Scotts Valley, CA 95066
Phone: (831) 454-4120 TDD/ TTY: Call 711
hsaems@santacruzcountyca.gov
santacruzhealth.org



EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE COMMISSION AGENDA

DATE & TIME	Monday, October 20, 2025, 9:00am – 10:30am
LOCATION-In-Person	County of Santa Cruz, 1400 Emeline Ave., Rooms 206/207
LOCATION-Online	Microsoft Teams Need help? Join the meeting now Meeting ID: 266 641 467 087 Passcode: UJ6Pg3HB Dial in by phone +1 831-454-2222,,393472745# United States, Santa Cruz Find a local number Phone conference ID: 393 472 745#

COMMISSIONERS:

Ron Prince, EMCC Chair Person, District 1, M. Koenig,	Chris Clark, Law Enforcement
Jerry Souza, District 2, K. De Serpa	Rob Oatey, Fire Chief's Assoc.
Celia Barry, District 3, J. Cummings	Tammy Green, Dominican Hospital Rep.
Michael Baulch, District 4, F. Hernandez	<i>Open Position, Watsonville Hospital Rep.</i>
Dan Quinto, District 5, M. Martinez	Jeremy Boston, AMR
Dr. Marc Yellin, Medical Society	Chris Jones, Consumer Representative
Samantha Moeller, Field Representative	

COUNTY STAFF:

Greg Benson, EMS Director	Dr. Eli Carrillo, EMS Medical Director
Emily Chung, Public Health Director	Shelley Huxtable, EMS Office Assistant
Claudia Garza, Sr. Dept. Admin. Analyst	

ITEM:

1. Call to Order/Establish Quorum.

2. Review/Correct Agenda & Approve Minutes from August 18, 2025 meeting.

3. Written Correspondence Listing:

The Written Correspondence Listing is established to act as a report of materials received by the Commission as a whole but, may also include items requested for inclusion by individual Commissioners. Upon completion of any actions deemed necessary (i.e., acknowledgment, referral, etc.), these items are included in the Written Correspondence Listing. While these items are not part of the official record of

meetings of the Emergency Medical Care Commission, they will be maintained by the Santa Cruz County Emergency Medical Services Agency for a period of two years.

4. Oral Communications:

Oral Communications for items not on the agenda will be presented for discussion purposes only and may be brought to the Commission by Commissioners or members of the public. Comments are limited to 3 minutes per person.

5. Commissioner Chris Clark Resignation (Ron Prince)

6. Watsonville Hospital Financial Update (Stephen Gray, Watsonville Hospital CEO)

The EMCC will receive an update on Watsonville Hospital's current financial status.

7. All County Hospitals Update - Dominican, WCH, Sutter, Kaiser

The EMCC will hear updates from all County hospitals regarding their financial status, future plans and strategies.

8. Review and Consider Approval of the EMCC's Response to AMR's Request for a 30-month Contract Extension (Ron Prince)

Pursuant to AMR's June 8, 2025 letter from Michael Esslinger, the EMCC will review and discuss the response to AMR's request for a 30-month contract extension. Following the discussion, the EMCC may consider approving the response for submission to the Board of Supervisors.

9. Review and Consider EMCC Endorsement and Support for 6-Minutes to Live Initiative (Ron Prince)

The EMCC will discuss the 6-Minutes to Live Initiative and consider providing formal endorsement and support.

10. Ad-Hoc Committee Update (Ron Prince)

Update on the progress of the 12 Month Action Plan and the Ad-Hoc Committee's activities.

11. Commissioner Updates (Ron Prince)

Status updates from Commissioners, updates limited to 2 minutes per Commissioner.

12. Program Updates:

A. Communicable Disease/Prehospital Advisory Committee Update (Dr. Eli Carrillo)

The Commission will receive updates on communicable diseases and an update of actions taken by the Prehospital Advisory Committee.

Impact to the hospitals Information link:

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/CommunicableDiseaseControl/CoronavirusHome.aspx>

B. EMS Administrator Report (Greg Benson)

The Administrator will report on issues of interest, challenges, progress and concerns for the Commission to consider for action, if necessary.

C. Innovator Report (Jake Thorsen/Jeremy Boston)

The Commission will receive an update from AMR about the EMS Innovator programs.

13. Proposed Agenda Items for next EMCC meeting on December 15, 2025.

14. Adjournment.

Item 5

Commissioner Chris Clark Resignation Ron Prince

The EMCC will acknowledge the resignation of Commissioner Chris Clark.

Item 6

Watsonville Hospital Financial Update Stephen Gray, Watsonville Hospital CEO

The EMCC will receive an update on Watsonville Hospital's current financial status.

Item 7

County Hospitals Financial Updates and Future Plans Dominican, Watsonville, Sutter & Kaiser

The EMCC will hear updates from all County hospitals regarding their financial status, future plans and strategies.

Item 8

Review and Consider Approval of the EMCC's Response to AMR's Request for a 30-month Contract Extension Ron Prince

Pursuant to AMR's June 8 letter from Mike Esslinger, the EMCC will review and discuss the response to AMR's request for a 30-month contract extension. Following the discussion, the EMCC may consider approving the response for submission to the Board of Supervisors.



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Memo to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors 10-20-2025

To: Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

From: The Emergency Medical Care Commission (EMCC)

Re: Request from AMR to Approve a Thirty Month Contract Extension for the County of Santa Cruz Emergency Ambulance Agreement

BACKGROUND: On June 8th, 2025, the County's EMS Director received a request from AMR's Regional Director (see Exhibit A, attached) to extend the current 911 ambulance contract for an additional thirty months, pursuant to the terms in the original contract that went into effect on January 1st, 2019. If approved, this will be the 2nd thirty month extension to the original contract and would start on July 1, 2026.

Section 1.3 of the County of Santa Cruz Emergency Ambulance Agreement stipulates that the Board of Supervisors may establish a review committee to analyze the performance of the contractor and make recommendations to the contract administrator prior to approving a contract extension. (The Board of Supervisors administers this contract through its oversight of the County's EMS Agency.) The EMCC is responsible, in part, to act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors on all matters relating to ambulance services for Santa Cruz County, and acts as this review committee. This memo is intended to provide the Commission's input regarding the request for an additional contract extension with AMR.

As outlined in the original contract, the conditions for a contract extension include a favorable evaluation of the Contractor's:

- compliance with the contract
- fiscal and operational performance
- quality improvement and education programs
- cooperation with the LEMSA and other EMS stakeholders

- management of complaints
- professionalism in the community
- effectiveness in managing and coordinating first responders agreements
- performance in meeting established clinical and performance standards.

DISCUSSION: The Commission agrees with the content of AMR's June 8th letter requesting the contract extension and finds AMR in compliance with the contract requirements.

SUMMARY: The EMCC believes that AMR has performed well and is complying with the contract terms and conditions. The EMCC recommends that the BOS approve the proposed Ambulance Contract extension. The term of this extension will run from July 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028.

AMR has demonstrated a willingness to be an effective partner with the EMS office, the EMSIA and other system participants. Looking to the future, it is clear that the County's EMS system will face many challenges ahead. Chief among these challenges will be developing sustainable funding for ambulance transport services at a time when reimbursements from government payors will very likely be reduced. It is therefore imperative that the County Board of Supervisors advocate and support the development and implementation of best practices and innovation regarding the provision of ambulance transport services and the design and management of the County's EMS system as a whole.

Respectfully submitted and on behalf of the entire EMCC, Ron Prince, Chair

Attached: Exhibit A – Letter from AMR dated June 8th, 2025, regarding their request for a 30 month contract extension



June 8, 2025

Gregory Benson | Emergency Medical Services Director
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency
1800 Green Hills Rd.
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

RE: Extension of Agreement to Provide Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service for County of Santa Cruz (Agreement No. 19H0127) ("Agreement")

Dear Greg:

In accordance with Section 1.3 of our agreement with the County of Santa Cruz, this letter serves as a formal request to approve a 30-month extension for American Medical Response West (AMR) to continue providing Advanced Life Support Ambulance Services.

We are pleased to confirm that AMR has met and, in most cases, exceeded the required terms for this extension. Despite the unprecedented challenges of the past few years, including the pandemic, severe flooding threats, and wildfires, our commitment to the Santa Cruz County EMS system has remained steadfast. We have consistently surpassed our contractual response time compliance standard of 90%.

We believe a long-term extension is in the best interest of the public and system stakeholders. It will enable us to:

- Continue necessary capital expenditure replacements
- Maintain educational scholarships and long-term staffing investments
- Uphold the terms of our competitive labor agreement
- Ensure the stability and future of EMS services through long-term planning

We are incredibly proud of our employees, whose dedication to clinical excellence during these crises has been exceptional. As your partner, we will continue to collaborate with all system stakeholders, leveraging our local and national experience to enhance the Santa Cruz County EMS system now and into the future.

Response Time Performance: AMR has consistently surpassed the 90% standard for system-wide adjusted response time compliance. This high level of performance was maintained even during the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread fires, demonstrating our resilience and unwavering commitment to our contractual obligations.

Response Time Compliance (* In Progress)							
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Q1 First ALS Unit Response	93.02%	90.73%	90.35%	90.33%	90.49%	90.01%	90.19%
Q1 Transport Unit Response	96.60%	94.62%	93.81%	91.01%	91.21%	91.11%	92.22%
Q2 First ALS Unit Response	92.92%	90.28%	91.60%	90.12%	91.23%	90.18%	*
Q2 Transport Unit Response	95.63%	93.90%	92.24%	92.64%	91.36%	93.14%	*
Q3 First ALS Unit Response	92.53%	90.11%	90.24%	90.17%	90.10%	90.05%	*
Q3 Transport Unit Response	95.52%	93.92%	90.97%	90.65%	91.02%	90.17%	*
Q4 First ALS Unit Response	90.75%	90.15%	90.08%	90.13%	90.41%	90.00%	*
Q4 Transport Unit Response	94.58%	93.75%	90.62%	91.05%	90.52%	91.48%	*

Deployment, Staffing, and Fleet Resources: We consistently exceed the requirement for an annual deployment analysis by conducting a comprehensive demand study every six months. This proactive approach allows us to continually refine our system, implementing necessary adjustments to unit hours, schedules, and shift configurations. Following our most recent study, AMR has approved and will be adding 84 scheduled unit hours to align our deployment model with the demand analysis results.

To address the national paramedic shortage, AMR developed a multi-stage solution in Santa Cruz County. We initially launched a successful, short-term paramedic program with a local educational institution. Building on this success, in 2025, we established two semi-local campuses for the National College of Technical Instruction (NCTI), a division of AMR. This dedicated training facility provides a broad range of local educational opportunities, ensuring a sustainable pipeline of skilled personnel to meet the County's evolving healthcare needs.

Our front-line ambulance fleet is meticulously maintained, with vehicles replaced to meet the mileage standards outlined in Section 4.3 of our agreement. Key highlights of our fleet management include:

- Transitioning the entire front-line fleet to modern, efficient Transit-style vehicles
- Maintaining a reserve fleet at 140% of our requirement
- Leveraging our national purchasing power to secure new vehicles annually, despite nationwide shortages
- Operating a shared tri-county fleet department to ensure the highest standards in maintenance and repairs

- Replacing six vehicles in the last 24 months, with an additional five scheduled for replacement in 2025

Standby Services: AMR remains a committed community partner, consistently providing dedicated medical standby services for a wide range of community, commercial, and charitable events throughout Santa Cruz County.

Clinical Excellence and Innovation: AMR is dedicated to enhancing clinical care through data-driven quality improvement. Using a scorecard system to monitor key metrics, we analyze system-wide trends to target areas for improvement. A prime example is our Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) initiative. Under the leadership of our Clinical Manager, a focus on aspirin administration that began in 2018 evolved into a comprehensive ACS Care Bundle. By applying the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) methodology, we dramatically increased the median percentage of ACS patients receiving the full care bundle from an initial 26% to our current 95%. This successful, patient-level project was achieved through a system-wide collaboration led by AMR staff.

Our commitment to clinical excellence is also demonstrated through several ongoing programs:

Clinical Feedback: We provide detailed feedback to crews for all Code 3 returns and follow up on critical patients to enhance learning and close the clinical loop.

Air Ambulance Integration: We conduct monthly clinical reviews with CALSTAR/REACH (Air Ambulance Services) to ensure the appropriate mode of transport is always used based on patient acuity, optimizing resource allocation.

Innovator Position: We have collaborated with stakeholders to redefine the responsibilities of our Innovator position to help maintain the highest levels of clinical excellence.

Patient Satisfaction: Providing compassionate care is a cornerstone of our service. To objectively measure our performance, AMR utilizes the EMS Survey Team, an independent organization, to survey patients about their experience. For the twelve-month period ending in June 2025, AMR's Santa Cruz operations achieved an overall patient satisfaction score of 93.58%, significantly exceeding the national average.

We are honored to continue as your trusted partner in providing advanced life support ambulance services to the County of Santa Cruz. The performance and innovations detailed above reflect our unwavering commitment to our shared mission of delivering the highest quality care to our communities. We welcome the opportunity to discuss our performance with you further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael Esslinger

Regional Director, Santa Cruz County
American Medical Response

Item 9

Review and Consider EMCC Endorsement and Support for the 6-Minutes to Live Initiative Ron Prince

The EMCC will discuss the 6-Minutes to Live Initiative and consider providing formal endorsement and support.