

November 18, 2005

Alderman Robert Puente, Chair
Public Safety Committee
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Minority Report

Dear Alderman Puente,

The following is a supplemental summary of the views and concerns of Paratech Ambulance Service in regard to the findings and recommendations of the City of Milwaukee Basic Life Support Transport Review Task Force, which was charged with evaluating and possibly finding alternative ways to improve the City of Milwaukee Basic Life Support System.

First, we will offer our views regarding each point listed in the report. Second, we will address areas that were discussed, but not included in the final report.

Respectfully,

Lawrence J. Knuth
V.P. Operations

LJK:psb

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Milwaukee Basic Life Support Transports Policy Review Task Force was created by resolution file number 041200 on December 21, 2004, and amended by Common Council Files 041670, 050173 and 050488. (See Appendix A for resolutions)

MISSION STATEMENT

This Task Force is charged with evaluating and possible finding alternative ways to improve the City of Milwaukee Basic Life System. The task force is directed to submit those findings and recommendations to the Common Council by November 1, 2005.

MEMBERSHIP

The Basic Life Support Transports Policy Review Task Force consists of 14 members:

Alderman Robert Puente, Chair

Fire Chief William Wentlandt

Bevan Baker (Commissioner of Health)

Rhonda Kelsey, Mayor's Office (Mayor's Designee)

Robert Rauch, Paratech Ambulance Service

R. A. Zehetner, Bell Ambulance

Linda Wiedmann, MedaCare Ambulance

Jim Baker, Curtis Universal, Inc.

Ron Pirrallo, MD, Milwaukee County Paramedic Program

Bruce Schrimpf, City Attorney Office (City Attorney's designee)

Thomas Nardelli (Appointed by Common Council President)(Resigned on 8/16/2005)

Dan Lipski (Appointed by Common Council President)

Jennifer Meyer, DOA-Budget & Management

Mr. Gregory L. Gracz, President, Local #215, Fire Fighters' Assoc.

MEETING DATES

Meetings were held on the following dates in 2005:

January 19
February 17
August 11
September 14
October 6
October 20

Agendas and meeting minutes are attached as Appendix B through G.

FINDINGS

The Task Force has heard testimony from the Comptroller's Office, the task force members, which included City of Milwaukee Fire Department, the four current private ambulance providers and the Firefighters union. The recommendations included in this report represent the goals of this task force to improve the current 911 EMS system.

Though some of the members felt that the current system, which is established by ordinance and has been in place for over 27 years has been working just fine and that they would like to continue under the current system; some of the members felt that the system needs accountability and finds that a change from the ordinance to a service contract could improve the system for the better.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations may require further refinement and review and may require ordinance amendments and/or contract negotiation to be implemented. Time has not allowed for a complete review of their legality and enforceability.

We, the members of the City of Milwaukee Basic Life Supports Transports Policy Review Task Force hereby recommend the following:

1. *Enable a Service Contract between the Ambulance Providers and the City.
Paratech's Response: Paratech's preference is to continue to operate under the ordinance and that the ordinance should be amended to clearly set forth performance criteria for ambulance providers and the penalties for failure to comply with the stated criteria, along with a process to implement the penalties.*
2. *Eliminate the Ambulance Service Board. Transition oversight authority on contract administration/approval, certifications and ambulance licensure to Public Safety Committee. (To be established by Ordinance. Ordinance change required.)
Paratech's Response: Paratech agrees.*
3. *That the Health Commissioner serves as an advisor to the Fire Chief/EMS System on issues that have a broader public health impact. To be established by Ordinance. Ordinance change required.
Paratech's Response: Paratech agrees.*
4. *The City Comptroller's Office may conduct an annual in-camera audit, but also may conduct other audits upon reasonable notice, and maintain that all financial records remain confidential. Atty. Schrimpf moved to amend by included the following: This information is only provided under the anticipated expectation under the confidential.
Paratech's Response: We feel this recommendation needs to be better define. However we do not object to the Comptrollers Office conducting in-camera audits, as long as all financial records remains confidential.*
5. *An appeal process shall be created by the Public Safety Committee under the ordinance or contract.
Paratech's Response: Paratech agrees.*
6. *Establish Fire Chief as city official responsible for EMS 911 contract compliance, day-to-day/operational provision of EMS 911 services in the City of Milwaukee, and the MFD as the primary provider of the EMS 911 services.
Paratech's Response: The wording "contract compliance" was not in the original motion and therefore should be struck. Otherwise, we agree that the Fire Chief is responsible for the day- to- day operations of the 911- system.*
7. *Standardize level of patient care throughout the 911 EMS system. Require in contract that all services provide the community standard of care. All patients shall receive the appropriate treatment and transport to the medically appropriate hospital of their choice, regardless of their ability to pay. (Consideration would be taken for the flexibility needed in transporting just outside of Milwaukee County, but there should also be some geographic limitation.)
Paratech's Response: Paratech agrees, but feels that this recommendation needs further development and clarity.*

8. *Medical standards and care protocols are universal for the 911 EMS. Each service will have their own medical director who is responsible, by contract to the overall EMS 911 system medical director. Every provider will be required by contract to use the system 911 EMS protocols.*

Paratech's Response: We agree the medical standards and care protocols need to be developed for the 911 EMS-system. Each service will have their own medical director who will participate in meetings conducted by the Fire Department to oversee quality control with regards to patient care, and will assist in developing 911 contract system protocols. This group of physicians may be obtained from hospitals operating within the City of Milwaukee. It is not clear in this motion who the medical director for the City of Milwaukee is or would be.

9. *Quality of care received should not vary by provider. The care provided by each company and the Fire Department under the EMS 911 system will be assessed by the system medical director on a monthly basis to ensure adherence to the community standard of care, as required by contract.*

Paratech's Response: Periodic assessments should not only be done by the system medical director (not yet defined), but should also include, on an equally weighted basis, the private provider's medical director.

10. *Role of private ambulance companies. To be established by contract.*

Paratech's Response: Consideration should be given to include private services into the ALS portion of the EMS system. We feel that we should be involved in developing the role of the private ambulance services in the 911-system.

11. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):

- a) *Access to private ambulance patient care information of 911 EMS System. All providers will report patient information on a monthly basis and more frequently if needed. This information is critical to assessing and surveiling the health of residents and visitors of the City of Milwaukee. It can be submitted electronically and it must be HIPAA compliance. To be established by contract.*

- b) *Mandatory participation in CQI system in the 911 EMS System. Full participation including the Fire Department; including the provision of patient care reports, to be required by contract. In addition, a central number for complaints regarding system providers will be established. All complaints, concerns, litigation must be reported in a timely matter.*

- c) *Performance measure criteria (response time, turned back calls, incident preparedness, etc.) as required by the contract. Monthly reporting of performance to be required by contract. Performance deficiencies to be assessed per the established contract.*

- d) *Billing reports received and audited by outside firm (for City 9-1-1 runs). To be required by contract to provide assurance that responses are billed appropriately.*

Paratech's Response: Paratech's response to a., b., c., is we agree with the spirit of the CQI, however their needs to be more clarity and definition to the specific criteria in developing the CQI process. d., We disagree. There was no evidence to require this type of expensive procedure.

12.) Include the following Performance Penalties:

- a. Failure to meet the response time performance standards in any month
- b. Failure to meet turn back performance standard in any month
- c. Failure to meet response time performance standard for any 90 consecutive day period.
- d. Failure to meet turn back performance standard for any 90 consecutive day period.
- e. Failure to turn back unable to handle call in required time period
- f. Emergency call with response time greater than maximum time allowed (exception during declared snow emergency)
- g. Failure to report on scene
- h. Unit not properly staffed upon arrival on scene
- i. Unit without required equipment upon arrival on scene
- j. Not responding to request for service
- k. Failure to operate according to City of Milwaukee BLS provider contract
- l. False reporting of incident times to include:
 - Alarm receipt
 - Alarm acknowledgement
 - Dispatch
 - Responding
 - On scene
 - At patient
 - Transport
 - At hospital
- m. Failure to provide required report(s) by the due date.

Paratech's Response: Regarding all the items listed in section 12, we agree fundamentally with the items stated in this section and reserve the right in future meetings to add additional criteria. We also want to state that these areas are to be used to judge the performance of an ambulance provider and that failure to meet these standards will result in a Service area adjustment down to a size, which the provider has demonstrated an ability to service according to the Provider Response Criteria.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT TRANSPORT POLICY TASK FORCE
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PARATECH AMBULANCE SERVICE
ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Removal of the 3% equity clause (75-15-13-b-2). - The “trigger” as it is referred to became part of the ordinance in 1992. It was recommended by the Ambulance Service Board as a method to address equity of sector dispatches. Performance criteria were supposed to be developed to also gauge “the delivery of the best possible quality care to the citizenry”. That criterion was never developed. To date realignment of sector lines has been based solely on number of dispatches. We believe this process has proven to be flawed. The 3% trigger does not consider the level of service that the citizen would receive.

Service Capability - We encourage the City to do a general due diligence of each ambulance Company as to it’s ability to provide ambulance service to the City of Milwaukee. Since you are referring the citizens for medical care to these providers, we feel you should know their capabilities. This due diligence should include but should not be limited to:

- Size of fleet
- Age of ambulances
- On board vehicle camera
- On Site in-house training
- Vehicle repair and maintenance facilities
- Indoor housing of ambulances
- Central dispatch (C.A.D., M.D.T., G.P.S.)
- Redundant Communications systems
- Electronic billing capability and customer service
- Data reporting capabilities
- CQI processes(s)
- Community Services program(s)

All four providers have been participants of the City of Milwaukee’s EMS system for more than 27 years. We feel that all ambulance services currently serving the City are not all of the same caliber and the City should take a close look as to the quality and resources that have been reinvested over the last 27 years. Our method of operation is that a properly run service, a company with a focus on the service to the customer should generate a financially stable Company. One who is focused on financial gains only does not necessarily provide the same outcome.

We would welcome the opportunity for the City to use Paratech as a benchmark for rating the providers. We have CQI process, MDT, electronic billing, optic imaging of medical records (paperless office), an authorized American Heart Association Community Training Center (CTC) and a full maintenance facility. These are just a few of the service elements that are overlooked in granting certification and sector allocation (call volume) all of which result in providing better patient care to the citizens of Milwaukee.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT TRANSPORT POLICY TASK FORCE
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PARATECH AMBULANCE SERVICE
ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Corporate reinvestment – When companies are being certified, consideration should be given to their involvement in the community. Paratech has been committed to servicing the community and continues to invest in the EMS system through the acquisition of property in the City.

As an example we own three buildings within our assigned service area and pay an accumulated real estate tax annually in excess of \$24,000.

ALS Capability - Paratech has Advance Life Support capabilities (paramedic units) that are not being utilized by the City of Milwaukee. In 2005, the City of Milwaukee added additional Milwaukee County paramedic units, which included redeployment of many of their units. There are times when the added capability from the private sector would be helpful and would not cause an excess demand on our service. On the contrary we believe it would improve the treatment and care that is currently offered to the City of Milwaukee citizens.