

Basic Life Support Task Force  
*Minority report*

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*Submitted by:*

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The following is a report of several of the key items discussed by the Basic Life Support (BLS) Task Force and our position on them.

**Contract Length and Participants**

Because studies have proven that the current City of Milwaukee BLS system is one of the best in the nation in terms of high-levels of service and cost efficiency, we respectfully request the contract considered by the City of Milwaukee ideally extend for 10 years and include the four private providers currently operating within the City ordinance.

We wish to reinforce that the City of Milwaukee BLS system has operated capably and with few problems under the current terms for the past 27 years, and caution that any major changes to the system may severely affect the quality of service provided, potentially putting lives at risk.

Ambulance service is considered to be a utility for a large number of reasons, the foremost being that there is a large investment needed in the way of equipment and stations to provide the service. Any contract shorter than five years in length drastically increases the cost of providing this service to the residents of Milwaukee, as well as increases the risk of equipment failures.

**Ambulance Service Board**

We believe that it is of critical importance that an independent, impartial group continues to exist for the purpose of monitoring the performance of both the private providers and the Milwaukee Fire Department with regard to basic and advanced life support services.

Without the guidance of this subcommittee of the Public Safety Committee of the Common Council, responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the rules and regulations of providers falls upon the Public Safety Committee. Because some issues brought to the Board can be complicated and/or contentious, elimination of the Board would send these issues before the Public Safety Committee, requiring additional resources and a significant amount of time from our elected officials.

In order to have a truly impartial Board, we feel it reasonable to request equal representation among the private providers and the Milwaukee Fire Department (i.e., If all four privates and the MFD cannot have a representative on the Board, none should be afforded the opportunity.)

Because we feel the Ambulance Service Board provides critical oversight, we believe it is essential that this or another independent review board continue to exist.

### **Division and Adjustment of Service Sectors**

To ensure equality of call volume among private providers, we believe that in the event one of the providers is unable to meet the terms of the contract, the City should be divided into a number of sectors equal to the number of providers abiding by the terms of the contract.

We feel this division would promote the most efficient operation of the BLS system and best serve the citizens of Milwaukee in the event of a change in the number of private providers.

While we support the “3% rule,” we do believe 2% to be more reasonable. Sector adjustment is done on an annual basis to eliminate large disparities in call volume and resources between providers.

### **Unified Dispatch System**

As the benefits from a move as this are obvious, we feel this is a very useful issue that could potentially strengthen the current system and should be reviewed further. We feel that a more clear definition of what would be included within a unified dispatch system (i.e., any call from a non-medical facility that would result in a lights-and-siren dispatch) should be agreed upon to build support for this concept.

We would also ask the committee to take into consideration the additional resources the Milwaukee Fire Department would require to make a unified dispatch system a reality.

### **Continuous Quality Improvement**

In order to provide the highest level of service to the residents of Milwaukee, we feel it is essential that ALL providers, including the Milwaukee Fire Department be required to participate in either the City or County CQI program.

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To truly promote transparency and correct flaws within the system, all complaints regarding medical transports, including those issued to the Milwaukee Fire Department should be submitted as part of the CQI program, and subsequently corrected, to strengthen the working relationship among the entities involved and the system as a whole.

We are not opposed to the performance measuring criteria and penalties proposed by the Milwaukee Fire Department, provided that an appeals process be determined and instituted by the Ambulance Review Board.

**Advertising**

Although a recommendation on this issue is not found in the majority report, we believe ambulance advertising to the general public is one of the few flaws within our current BLS system and needs to be strictly controlled, if not completely eliminated.