

Attachment A

Date: April 6, 2005

To: Health and Hospital Committee
via Guadalupe S. Olivas, PhD

From: Bruce H. Lee
EMS Administrator

Subject: **2004 Annual Review of the Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resource (STAR-CAR)**

BACKGROUND

Santa Clara County has contracted with American Medical Response (AMR) since 1979 for the provision of emergency paramedic ambulance services. On September 25, 2001 the Board approved a new Master Service Agreement with AMR for the period of October 1, 2001 through June 30, 2006.

In addition to establishing performance standards and payment provisions, the agreement provides legal authority for AMR to enter into and maintain subcontracts with public agencies (cities) within the County. The subcontracts enable fire department paramedic engines to respond to medical emergencies in order to assess the patient and initiate emergency medical treatment as appropriate prior to the arrival of the AMR paramedic ambulance.

Several of these subcontracts (City of San Jose, City of Santa Clara, and the City of Gilroy) include an Addendum for Services, which allows the city to provide Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resource (STAR-CAR) service at their own expense. Utilization of STAR-CAR's is limited to transport of patients with severe *and* imminently life threatening conditions, and only in the event that AMR paramedic ambulances are delayed in excess of acceptable and established response times. The primary intent of the STAR-CAR program is to provide a "safety net" for patients, particularly in the event of an individual life threatening injury or illness, or an event involving multiple patients that require immediate paramedic ambulance transport to a general acute care hospital.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

Section VI-A of the Contract Addendum requires that the EMS Agency conduct an annual review of the STAR-CAR program with the STAR-CAR provider agencies and the Contractor (AMR). The intent of this review is to evaluate the following:

1. Impact on patient mortality and morbidity
2. Appropriateness of utilization
3. Financial impacts of the program on the (EMS) system
4. Recommendations for program modification including expansion, reduction, and/or termination.

Impact on Patient Outcomes

The program appears to have a positive impact on improving patient outcome for the limited number of patients that receive service under the STAR CAR program. However, this assumption has not been validated through any type of study or program evaluation.

Appropriateness of Utilization

The EMS Agency facilitates a review and evaluation of all STAR CAR activations to assure appropriateness under the terms of the master agreement. Both AMR and the STAR CAR first responder agency are involved in the review. Final determination of appropriateness of use is made by the contract administrator (EMS Administrator).

Prior to implementation, it was estimated that approximately ten (10) STAR-CAR transports would occur each month. Through December 2004, this would have equated to approximately three hundred and sixty (360) transports. However, a total of only thirty (30) transports by Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resources have occurred since October of 2001.

**Table 1: Past Review / STAR-CAR Transports
October 1, 2001 through September 30, 2003**

First Responder Agency	Nature of Activation	Date	Appropriate
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	01-15-02	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	02-01-02	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	02-05-02	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	02-22-02	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	03-12-02	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	08-11-02	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	08-15-02	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	11-22-02	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	02-23-03	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	04-30-03	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Unique Circumstances	06-04-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	07-16-03	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	07-16-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	09-07-03	Yes
Total Transports			14

In the current evaluation period (October 1, 2003 to December 31, 2004), sixteen (16) STAR-CAR transports (of the 30 total transports) occurred.

**Table 2: Current Review Term / STAR-CAR Transports
October 1, 2003 through December 31, 2004**

First Responder Agency	Nature of Activation	Date	Appropriate
City of San Jose Fire Department	Multi-Casualty Incident	10-07-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Requested by Contractor	12-04-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Requested by Contractor	12-06-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Requested by Contractor/EMS Agency	12-11-03	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Unique Circumstances	01-28-04	No
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	03-02-04	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	First Responder Determination	03-15-04	No
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	03-17-04	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	04-27-04	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	05-21-04	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Life Threatening Condition	06-29-04	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Unique Circumstances	09-04-04	Yes
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Unique Circumstances	09-08-04	Yes
City of Gilroy Fire Department	First Responder Determination	10-17-04	No
City of Santa Clara Fire Department	Inter-County Mutual Aid	11-19-04	Yes
City of San Jose Fire Department	First Responder Determination	12-12-04	Yes
Total Transports			16

Requested by Contractor

The STAR-CAR was used at the request of AMR due to low system ambulance levels and delayed response.

Requested EMS Agency

The STAR-CAR was used at the request of the EMS Agency and in cooperation with AMR based on low system levels and delayed response.

Unique Circumstances

The STAR-CAR was used because of unique circumstances at the scene of the call. Examples of unique circumstances are scene security or safety issues, patient size, or other special circumstances.

First Responder Determination

First responders determined that a STAR-CAR should be used for transport because the patient met medical criteria and AMR ambulance was delayed.

Financial Impacts of the Program on the (EMS) System

There is no fiscal impact on the County General Fund as a result of this program. All costs associated with the STAR-CAR program are the responsibility of the respective city in which the program is operated.

There is a potential for negative fiscal impact on the ambulance contractor (AMR) if STAR CAR utilization exceeds projected use. As of this date, STAR CAR utilization has been below projections and subsequently has not resulted in financial impact to AMR.

CONCLUSIONS

Expansion of programs should be limited to the addition of new providers through the existing subcontractor agreements with AMR. The City of Gilroy was authorized to provide STAR-CAR service on January 14, 2004 (discussed in the 2003 Annual STAR-CAR Report). The first use of the Gilroy STAR-CAR occurred in October of 2004.

Last year, the EMS Agency recommended that the First Responder Agencies utilizing STAR-CARs provide an orientation to new AMR employees to ensure familiarity with the program and to ask questions about the service provided. The review panel determined that a video program would be the best means to provide a standardized message to all prehospital care providers. The EMS Agency had submitted a request to fund an EMS System Orientation video through the EMS Trust Fund. However, these funds remain on hold based on the current budget situation in the County.

The EMS Agency continues to work with the Contractor and Sub-Contractors to refine operational and utilization review practices. A refined review process has been developed that provides for open communication, cooperative problem solving, and is coordinated with quality assurance and improvement practices. Procedures for the activation and use of STAR-CARs have also been refined to provide for consistency among provider agencies.

The Supplemental Transport Ambulance Resource (STAR-CAR) program is a safety net that ensures emergency paramedic ambulance transportation for those who are critically ill or injured and cannot await the arrival of the Contractors' (AMR) ambulance, in specific and limited situations. The program adds depth of resources to the County's paramedic ambulance system and provides additional capacity in times of call volume surge or disaster response. The STAR CAR program, however, requires continual oversight and compliance monitoring to be effective.