



CONFIRE

STAFF REPORT

DATE: 1/25/2022

FROM: Art Andres, Communications Director

TO: Administrative Committee

SUBJECT: ECNS Funding

RECOMMENDATION

Approve three months of operating expenses to continue the contractual agreement with Regional Emergency Medical Services Agency (REMSA) for the Emergency Communication Nurse System (ECNS).

BACKGROUND

The San Bernardino County Emergency Medical Care Committee (EMCC) created a sub-committee to address the ambulance patient overload delay (APOD) concern in our community using emergency medical dispatch (EMD) utilized by the secondary PSAPs in the County. Several years were spent to explore multiple options and a determination was made to implement an ECNS program. EMD can determine acuity of a patient with a high degree of accuracy. Using internationally approved protocols, CONFIRE can transfer Alpha and Omega calls to an ECNS center where the patient receives a case management type of service, placing the person at the right location for appropriate care.

The San Bernardino County region has been impacted heavily by COVID 19. The surge of patients complicates the growing APOD concern, which resulted in an acceleration of the ECNS project in December of 2020. CARES Act monies were authorized to be used for the ECNS project, which funded the REMSA agreement through December 31, 2021. Productive discussions have been on-going with regional payors which is believed to be a solution to the sustainability of the ECNS program, but no commitments have been established to date.

December 10, 2020 the CONFIRE Board of Directors approved a fund balance transfer of \$250,000 into the general reserve fund 5010 to be utilized for EMD optimization projects specific to ECNS. CONFIRE petitioned the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors for American Rescue Plan monies to implement a full-time program, using CONFIRE employees, as

outlined in the budget in the adopted business plan. The item will be brought before the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors during the February 8th, 2022 meeting.

The goal has been to have all ECNS staff be CONFIRE employees. CONFIRE has an approved 2021/22 budget which did not include staff for ECNS. CONFIRE has been exploring all options to fund startup costs, including staffing, which will be incurred beyond 2021 but no funding source has been secured to date.

FISCAL IMPACT

\$250,000 has been set aside for EMD optimization by the CONFIRE Board of Directors. Based on the previous 12 months of service from REMSA, 3 months of service is not expected to exceed \$120,000.