

2022-2023 KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY



Kern County Public Health Emergency Medical Services

Release Date

April 17, 2023





Photo from (www.kernpublichealth.com)

COUNTY OF KERN

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

SUMMARY:

All Emergency Response and Care is Not Equal! Is Emergency Care in Crisis? The mission statement for the County of Kern (County) Department of Public Health is, “To protect and safeguard the health and safety of the community.” The Emergency Medical Services Program (EMS) has the same mission, to protect the community in cases of an emergency.

All revenue for EMS is generated from fees, licenses, permits, certifications, State and Federal funds. No County funds are used to support EMS (See Appendix A).

The EMS term refers to the medical professionals who respond to 911 calls, treat, and transport people in time of a critical health situation. The EMS is responsible for all services from emergency to pre-hospital care. The EMS staff has the responsibility of assigning the proper designations to each hospital and certifying the designation annually. Not all hospital emergency departments are designated to handle all the different types of emergencies. Hopefully you are directed to the right hospital by the care provider, or critical time may be wasted. Be informed; it is your choice!

The 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) concluded that EMS first response teams are suffering from a major loss of staff due to COVID-19. Recruitment is low for both Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics. Local ambulance companies and the Kern County Fire Department (KCFD) are working with a new recruitment system to increase the number of certified EMTs and paramedics. More EMS first responders will help better serve the County and help reduce response times. The increase in new recruits will help the EMS and the community to recover after major losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

(A Glossary is provided to help understand the terms used in this Report.)

PURPOSE OF INQUIRY:

California Penal Code §925 authorizes the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of the Kern County Public Health Department and contracts with vendors. In light of this, the Grand Jury conducted an investigation into the EMS.

METHODOLOGY:

The Grand Jury began the inquiry into the Kern County Public Health Department and Emergency Medical Services Program by researching the Kern County website. Other research led to the California Emergency Medical Services Authority website for information. On-site interviews were conducted at the Kern County Public Health facility with the EMS staff. Other interviews were held with ambulance service providers and the KCFD personnel.

DISCUSSION OF FACTS:

Kern County is both geographically and demographically diverse. Located at the southern end of California's great Central Valley, Kern County is the gateway to southern California, the San Joaquin Valley, the Sierra Nevada, and the Mojave Desert. It is larger than the States of Delaware, Rhode Island, and Connecticut combined, encompassing 8,130 square miles, making it the third largest county in California. This requires a large variety of equipment and staff to meet the EMS needs: metro areas, interstate highways, mountainous terrain and passages, river and lake rescues, remote desert communities, oil fields, and farming communities.

Kern County Public Health

The Director of Public Health Services manages the Countywide Department that includes the Emergency Medical Services Program and reports directly to the Kern County Board of Supervisors (BOS). The Public Health Services Department provides a wide range of services to assist in the prevention of disease and the improvement of health, safety, and quality of life for County residents and visitors. The Public Health Department's current Budget is over \$50 million.

Emergency Medical Services Program

The EMS has 12 employees: Administrative Coordinator, Public Health Program Manager, two Senior Emergency Medical Services Coordinators, and eight Emergency Medical Services Coordinators. The EMS is responsible for all medical services throughout the County; everything from pre-hospital care to the emergency departments, and some instances from hospitals to other locations. Each of the ten County hospitals with emergency departments are licensed, accredited, and given a designation for care (stroke, heart, trauma, etc.) by the EMS. The EMS Medical Director oversees medical/clinical components of the EMS system. This includes medical protocol development, policies, procedures, equipment approval, medical

dispatch, base station protocols, and continuous quality performance reviews. The EMS provides for overall administration, direction, and management for emergency service which includes:

- Training and certification/accreditation for over 3,000 EMS personnel
- Medical dispatch and communications
- Interaction with hospital emergency departments and specialty care centers
- Emergency medical data collections and analysis
- Promotion of public health information and EMS education
- Medical disaster preparedness, planning, and response
- Kern County Health Care Coalition
- Kern Medical Reserve Corps
- Hospital Base Station Management
- Trauma System Management
- ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI) System Management
- Stroke System Management
- Burn System Management
- Coordination of emergency transportation service providers and seven first responder agencies

The Grand Jury Investigation Revealed the Following Facts:

- A. The yearly County Budget for the EMS is about two million dollars (See Appendix A for details). Income is generated from fees, licenses, permits, certifications, State and Federal funds.
- B. There are 10 acute care hospitals in Kern County serving a population of 878,744 people in an area of 8,130 square miles. The average is one hospital per 54,921 people, and one hospital per 508 square miles.
- C. Kern County hospitals are health care institutions that provide medical and surgical treatment. Some hospitals provide emergency care in response to injuries, sudden or severe illness, laboratory and other diagnostics, scheduled surgeries, labor and delivery, inpatient treatment, and recovery. Hospitals also offer a range of support services, including prescriptions, family support, counseling, and home nursing services. Specialty care designation for approved care has an annual fee, payable to EMS, ranging from \$20,069 to \$140,133 depending on the designation (See Appendix A).
- D. COVID-19 pandemic played a major role in the 911 medical calls in Kern County for the past three years, with a 5% increase in calls in the year 2021 compared to 2019.

- E. According to the Public Health Department, the County has seen an unprecedented increase in 911 medical call volumes:

Year	CALLS	Increase from 2019
2019	107,301	0 %
2020	105,356	-2 %
2021	113,021	5 %
2022	130,449	22 %

- F. In the year 2022, there were 130,449 medical 911 calls; this is a 22% increase compared to 2019.
- G. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, California has a shortage of over 7,000 EMTs and paramedics and 21,000 nationwide. Kern County has a shortage of over 100 EMTs and paramedics.
- H. The research noted the following about paramedics:
1. Interviews indicated that paramedics love their job
 2. Job stress level is high due to numerous responsibilities
 3. Highest ranking medical responder at the scene oversees medical care
 4. Paramedics must have knowledge of medical protocols and medications
 5. Paramedics can transfer to other counties and receive a raise in pay and advance in rank
 6. Training to certification may take 18-24 months
- I. Both ambulance companies operating in the County have experienced a staff reduction of about 20%. Both ambulance companies and the KCFD are actively recruiting for new EMTs and paramedics.
- J. The interval of time between the arrival of an ambulance at the hospital's emergency department and the time the hospital assumes responsibility for the patient's care is called Ambulance Patient Offload Times (APOT). Ambulance crews spent over 17,240 APOT hours for the year 2022, in Kern County. The APOT have usually been long during the pandemic period. This ties up the unit, with first responders having down time and unavailable for another call. In one instance, an ambulance waited as long as 24 hours at the hospital to offload a patient in height of the pandemic.

Medical Air Transport

The Kern County Board of Supervisors, at the December 6, 2022 Meeting, approved a retroactive agreement with the Mercy Air Ambulance Services Inc., for designation as an authorized pre-hospital EMS aircraft provider from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2027, in an estimated amount of \$90,000 in EMS revenue. Air ambulance means any aircraft specially constructed, modified or equipped and used for the primary purposes of responding to emergency calls and transporting critically ill or injured patients with a flight crew of a minimum

two clinicians licensed in advance life support. Mercy Air is a full-service air medical transport system that has served California and Nevada for over 30 years. Mercy Air will provide rapid transport for critically ill and injured patients, transfer of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) patients from one hospital to another or complicated trauma requests from an EMS provider to trauma emergency departments.

Ground Ambulance Transport

The County is divided into Exclusive Operating Areas (EOA) for ground ambulance response and transportation. Request for Proposal (RFP) bids are solicited to cover each EOA and are then awarded a permit and contract to operate within that area. The County collects an annual fee of \$21,336 per EOA, and penalties for non-compliance or breach of contract may also be assessed.

Ambulance Exclusive Operating Areas:

- EOA 1 Wasco/Lost Hills
- EOA 2 Shafter/Buttonwillow
- EOA 3 Delano/McFarland
- EOA 4 Bakersfield
- EOA 6 Lake Isabella/Kernville
- EOA 7 Ridgecrest
- EOA 8 Pine Mountain Club/Frazier Park/Arvin/Lamont/Tehachapi
- EOA 9 Taft/Maricopa/McKittrick
- EOA 11 Mojave/California City/North Edwards/Boron/Rosamond

Contracted ground ambulance providers:

- Hall Ambulance Service Inc. has a base operation located at 2001 ‘O’ Street, Bakersfield, with stations located within their EOAs. Contracts for Hall include EOAs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 11 (See Appendix B).
- Progressive Ambulance Inc. is owned and operated by Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, doing business as Liberty Ambulance Service, and has contracts for EOAs 6 and 7. The main office is located at 350 East Ridgecrest Boulevard, Ridgecrest, with stations in Lake Isabella and Kernville (See Appendix B).
- Pro Safety & Rescue, Inc. has been incorporated into the Kern County 911 Emergency Response System to provide teams of two EMTs as active first responders for non-transport emergencies (See Appendix B).

An Annual Performance Report Summary is required for each EOA outlining the response compliance guidelines in 25 categories. Non-compliance occurs when the ambulance provider fails to meet 90% response time standard within a response zone, within the EOA, in any month

up to three consecutive months. EMS will assess a fine of \$1,067 to the ambulance provider for each non-compliance occurrence. Ambulance Response Time Compliance is a complex calculation that measures response times within the EOA by the priority code level of each call. A performance percentile is given in regard to the number of calls that meet the response times. Over the past four months both ambulance providers were able to improve compliance levels, even though call volumes were higher and staff shortages continue.

Hall Ambulance Service Inc. operates the County dispatch center located in Bakersfield. The dispatch center provides emergency medical dispatch capabilities for both ambulance service providers. The County requires the dispatch center to have Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) capabilities; dispatchers are specially trained, programs are in place to medically prioritize each call, and provide instructions to callers over the phone to assist with providing emergency medical care.

Both County ambulance companies were the first in the State to implement the Tele911™ System in all units. This system gives the first responders (EMTs and paramedics) a mobile computer to connect directly with a California emergency department physician. Physicians can perform telehealth visits with patients while the first responder is present. Vital patient information and patient history is uploaded for the physician to evaluate. Following the evaluation, the Tele911™ physician can determine whether the patient requires transportation to an emergency department or an alternative location, advise first responders as to treatment needed at the scene, and/or links the patients to more appropriate medical care or social services. Tele911™ medical providers can also contact the patient's private physician or pharmacy as needed. If it is determined that transportation is not needed for the patient, Tele911™ medical providers subsequently follow up with the patient via telehealth. The 911 first responders may clear the scene and become available for another call. Since the implementation in July 2022, the Tele911™ System has been utilized with 798 patients. Of those patients, only 211 or 26% required transportation to emergency services. Thus, 587 patients were able to remain in place and receive medical care.

Hospitals with Emergency Departments

The Emergency Medical Services Program has the authority to designate hospitals in the County with the approved medical services. The EMS will also perform reviews of each emergency department.

Trauma is the primary cause of death for people ages one to 44, regardless of gender, race, or economic status. The response from emergency personnel, including ambulance and hospital care, plays an important role in treating patients within what has become known as "The Golden Hour." This is the one-hour time from injury to receiving specialized trauma care; only 60 minutes from the moment of injury to call 911, dispatch an ambulance to the scene, transport the victim to a hospital, summon the appropriate surgical and support staff, and perform the necessary life-saving care.

Even though the County has ten acute care hospitals, it is of the utmost importance that in an emergency, the patient is transported to the right hospital to receive proper care. NOT ALL HOSPITALS ARE EQUAL! The County has only two designated Trauma Centers: Kern Medical is a Level II; Ridgecrest Regional Hospital is a Level IV.

- Trauma Centers are licensed hospitals designated by the local Emergency Medical Services Agency (Kern County EMS). General requirements include:
 - Trauma program medical director and a trauma nurse coordinator
 - Basic emergency department
 - Multidisciplinary trauma teams
 - Specified service capabilities
 - Performance Improvement and Patient Safety Program
 - Trauma Registry (data collection)
- Trauma Center Levels Overview:
 - Levels I and II have similar personnel, services, and resources to provide the most critical care available, except Level I are research and teaching facilities
 - Levels III and IV generally provide initial stabilization of the trauma patient and may transfer to a higher level of care, Level III has surgical capabilities

Adventist Hospital - Bakersfield: Base Station, Trauma Step 3, Orthopedic, Cardiac, STEMI, Neonatal, Obstetrical, Pediatrics Non-Emergency, Sexual Assault, Psychiatric without medical condition, Stroke meeting activation criteria, other patient conditions

Adventist Hospital - Delano: Base Station, Trauma Step 3, Pediatrics Non-Emergency, Psychiatric without medical condition, Medical Extremis, Traumatic Arrest, other patient conditions

Adventist Hospital - Tehachapi: Trauma Step 3, Psychiatric without medical condition, Medical Extremis, Traumatic Arrest, other patient conditions

Bakersfield Heart Hospital: Base Station, Trauma Step 3, Cardiac, STEMI, Psychiatric without medical condition, other patient conditions

Bakersfield Memorial Hospital: Base Station, Burns, Trauma Step 3, Orthopedic, Cardiac, STEMI, Neonatal, Obstetrical, Pediatrics Emergency, Pediatrics Non-Emergency, Psychiatric without medical condition, Stroke meeting activation criteria, other patient conditions

Kern Medical: Base Station, Trauma Level II, Trauma Step 3, Orthopedic, Neonatal, Obstetrical, Pediatrics Emergency, Pediatrics Non-Emergency, Psychiatric with or without medical condition, Stroke meeting activation criteria, Traumatic Arrest, other patient conditions

Kern Valley Hospital: Trauma Step 3, Psychiatric without medical condition, Medical Extremis, Traumatic Arrest, other patient conditions

Mercy Hospital Downtown - Bakersfield: Base Station, Trauma Step 3, Orthopedic, Psychiatric without medical condition, Stroke meeting activation criteria, other patient conditions

Mercy Hospital Southwest - Bakersfield: Base Station, Trauma Step 3, Orthopedic, Neonatal, Obstetrical, Psychiatric without medical condition, Stroke meeting activation criteria, other patient conditions

Ridgecrest Regional Hospital: Base Station, Trauma Level IV, Trauma Step 3, Obstetrical, Pediatrics Non-Emergency, Psychiatric without medical condition, Stroke Satellite with Primary Stroke Center Consult and Approval, other patient conditions

FINDINGS:

- F1. The public is unaware and/or unknowledgeable regarding the appropriate use of the 911 Call System. Many calls made to 911 are not priority and may be handled more efficiently with a visit to their physician's office or to a local urgent care facility.
- F2. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a major effect on the emergency care and first responders in Kern County. Ambulance response times were stressed due to the units waiting to offload patients at hospitals and the increase in call volumes have created a shortage of available units to respond to calls.
- F3. The National, State, and County EMT and paramedic shortage has placed a burden on the emergency medical system, with not enough ambulance units available, less paramedics in the field, and delayed Ambulance Patient Offload Times, which results in slower response times.
- F4. The APOT has tied up many ambulance units and personnel in long waiting lines. The hours waiting at the hospital could be used for other responses.
- F5. Stacking patients was used during critical times to free up units and crews to respond to the next emergency. This happens when one ambulance crew provides care for two to five patients at the same time at the same hospital (extra ambulance cots are stored at hospitals), allowing the other ambulance units to respond to other calls.
- F6. The Harvey L. Hall EMS Academy offers three EMT academies per year and one paramedic academy per year. EMT training and certification can be completed in about 90 days, Taft College offers an EMT course each semester. Paramedic training, licensing, and certification is completed over 18 months with a partnership

with Bakersfield College. More programs are needed to fill the 7,000 position shortages statewide.

- F7. The lack of certified paramedics and EMTs within the County has caused a severe shortage for both ambulance providers and the KCFD. Sign-on bonuses of \$20,000 and starting salaries of \$70,000 are being offered. Traveler paramedics are recruited to fill in on a short-term basis.
- F8. Of the ten approved acute care hospitals with emergency departments, two are approved for trauma level care; it is very important that the patient chooses the correct hospital for care, as this may not be the closest hospital at the scene of the emergency.
- F9. The BOS approved and authorized the retroactive Agreement with Ridgecrest Regional Hospital to extend the term for designation as a Level IV Trauma Receiving Center through May 3, 2023. Residents of East Kern County are better served with an approved trauma emergency department.
- F10. The Board of Supervisors has an agreement with Mercy Air to provide medical transport services from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2027. This agreement will ensure that the County will have air support medical transportation along with ground service for the next four years.
- F11. The use of Tele911™ medical system saves time in transportation, allows units to respond to other calls, and provides the patient with immediate access to an emergency department physician. Currently, reimbursements are not readily available to the ambulance providers unless there is transportation to a hospital.
- F12. The Kern County 911 Emergency Response System works with all EMS providers and dispatches through one system. The use of one dispatcher, Global Positioning System (GPS), black box, on-board computers, and a common radio frequency now provides real time locations of all first responders' units, thus ensuring the correct unit is responding to the emergency which makes the EMS system more efficient.
- F13. All emergency calls in Kern County for the ambulance providers are directed by the same dispatcher, and use the same radio frequency, allowing for better communications between the providers.
- F14. Using mutual aid agreements, Hall contracted with Liberty, Pro Safety & Rescue, and many out of the County ambulance companies to cover the required responses within the contracted EOAs.
- F15. The reimbursements rates from Medi-Cal and Medicare have not changed in 20 years and do not cover the current costs of ambulance transportation.

COMMENTS:

The Grand Jury thanks the Kern County Emergency Medical Services personnel for their cooperation and information provided. Thanks to the Kern County Fire Department and the two ambulance companies for providing pertinent information to complete this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- R1. The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Kern County Public Health Department should organize and coordinate a countywide job and information fair to recruit new paramedics and EMTs to fill the void in the emergency response teams. Coordination should include the ambulance providers, KCFD, community and vocational schools in the area. The first job and information fair should be completed by September 1, 2023. (Findings 3, 6, and 7)
- R2. The EMS should continue to expand the Tele911™ System, so the public and first responders are more comfortable with its use. The EMS in conjunction with the ambulance companies and Tele911™ should negotiate with insurance providers to allow for compensation for its use when transportation is not necessary. The first negotiation session should be completed by September 1, 2023. (Findings 11 and 15)
- R3. The EMS should coordinate with Harvey L. Hall EMS Academy, Kern County Fire Department, and Bakersfield College to recruit more candidates in the paramedic profession. This should be completed by September 1, 2023. (Findings 3, 6, and 7)
- R4. The EMS should advertise and inform the public of the importance of the 911 Call system as to when to use it and when to transport oneself to medical care. The first public announcement should be completed by September 1, 2023. (Findings 1 and 8)

NOTES:

- The Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Public Health Department should post a copy of this report where it will be available for public review.
- Persons wishing to receive an email notification of newly released reports may sign up at the Kern County Grand Jury website.
- Present and past Kern County Grand Jury Final Reports and Responses can be accessed on the Kern County Grand Jury website.

RESPONSE DEADLINES:

- **REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS FROM:**
 - **Kern County Board of Supervisors**
- **REQUESTED RESPONSE WITHIN 90 DAYS:**
 - Progressive Ambulance Inc.
 - Liberty Ambulance Service
 - Hall Ambulance Service Inc.
 - Kern County Fire Department
- **RESPONSES ARE REQUIRED PURSUANT TO PENAL CODE §§933(c) AND 933.05 WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:**
- **PRESIDING JUDGE**
KERN COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 212
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301
- **FOREMAN**
KERN COUNTY GRAND JURY
1415 TRUXTUN AVENUE, SUITE 600
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Cal. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.
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GLOSSARY

1. **Turned Call:** occurs when ambulances assigned to an EOA are not available to respond to a call within that EOA and ambulances from another EOA must respond.
2. **Mutual Aid:** occurs when ambulances provide service to another EOA or outside of the County.
3. **Surge:** The EMS created a surge plan that allows ambulance providers to not respond to, or “surge,” Alpha level, low acuity calls when the available ambulances in the Bakersfield Metro zone of the EOA reaches a specific level. This was due to the effects of COVID-19.
4. **Trauma Center:** hospital unit specializing in the treatment of patients with acute and especially life-threatening traumatic injuries.
5. **EMT:** specially trained medical technician certified to provide basic emergency services (such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation) before and during transportation to a hospital.
6. **Paramedic:** specially trained medical technician certified to provide a wide range of emergency medical services (as defibrillation and the intravenous administration of drugs) before or during transport to the hospital.
7. **STEMI (ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction):** profoundly life-threatening medical emergency and usually associated with a disease process called atherosclerosis (coronary artery disease). STEMI is a very serious type of heart attack during which one of the heart’s major arteries (one of the arteries that supplies oxygen and nutrient-rich blood to the heart muscle) is blocked.
8. **Medical Extremis:** in extreme circumstances especially at the point of death.
9. **Base Station:** general term used for emergency medical services radio console in a hospital emergency department. Also used to refer to a hospital that provides direct medical control to pre-hospital providers.
10. **GPS:** accurate worldwide navigational and surveying facility based on the reception of signals from an array of orbiting satellites.
11. **Black Box:** instrument that records all the activities of an aircraft or vehicles. Also called an electronic data recorder.
12. **Golden Hour:** commonly used to characterize the urgent need for the care of trauma patients. This term implies that morbidity and mortality are affected if care is not instituted within the first hour after injury.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

www.ems.ca.gov/ems-systems-division-trauma-level-overview

www.ca.gov/ems-systems-divison-about-trauma

[Hall Ambulance is the 9-1-1 Paramedic Provider to 94% of Kern County's population.](#)

<https://www.dnb.com/business-directory/company-profiles.prog>

[Kern County Public Health Department \(kernpublichealth.com\)](http://kernpublichealth.com)

[Hospital in Ridgecrest | Ridgecrest Regional Hospital \(rrh.org\)](http://rrh.org)

[Board of Supervisors | Kern County, CA](#)

[Paramedic Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

APPENDIX A

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BUDGET 2021-2022

EMS Actual

2021-2022

Revenue

Ambulance Permits		\$ 640,545
EMS Certification Fees		\$ 83,913
KCFD	\$ 17,279	
BFD	\$ 1,600	
Others	\$ 65,034	
Fines, Forfeitures, Penalties		\$ 0
Intergovernmental Revenue		\$ 233,796
State Health Administration	\$ 121,251	
Federal Health Administration	\$ 112,545	
Other Reimbursements (Charge for Service)		\$ 12,593
Miscellaneous Revenue		\$ 75
Other Financing/Operating Transfer		\$ 498,014
Total Revenue		\$ 1,468,786

Expenses

Salaries		\$ 1,034,847
Regular Wages	\$ 552,025	
Overtime	\$ 35,065	
Shift Differential	\$ 208	
Standby Time	\$ 19,630	
Bilingual Pay	\$ 51	
Extra Help Pay	\$ 836	
FICA	\$ 46,000	
County Retirement	\$ 268,348	
Deferred Comp Match	\$ 12,804	
Employee Health Benefits	\$ 61,671	
Retired Employee Med Ins.	\$ 3	
Qualified Flexible Benefits	\$ 8,205	
Clothing & Personal/Supplies	\$ 1,590	
Other	\$ 28,411	

Services and Supplies		\$ 775,436
Comm Telephone-Telegraph	\$ 20,981	
Comm Radio-Microwave	\$ 43,242	
Maintenance Equip	\$ 327	
Maintenance Struct/Ground Gen	\$ 8,400	
Med, Dntl, Lab Supp/ Med	\$ 6,747	
Membership	\$ 14,737	
Office Expenses	\$ 1,335	
Office Exp Postage	\$ 1,374	
Office Exp Duplicating	\$ 252	
Office Exp Books-Subscription	\$ 12,959	
Office Exp Equipment	\$ 8,282	
Prof & Spec Services	\$ 17,827	
PSS/Employee Physicals	\$ 170	
PSS/DATA Processing	\$ 301,629	
Rents-Lease, Equipment	\$ 2,204	
Rents-Lease, Structures	\$ 285,869	
Special Department Expense	\$ 23,653	
SDE Professional Fees	\$ 1,692	
SDE Education	\$ 6,788	
Transportation – Travel	\$ 7,132	
Transportation – Fuel	\$ 8,242	
Indirect-Internal Transfer	\$ 270,348	
Total Expenses		\$ 2,080,631
Net Surplus/(Deficit)		(\$ 611,845)

APPENDIX B

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES VEHICLES SEEN IN AND AROUND KERN COUNTY



Pro Safety & Rescue, Inc. (Photo, www.prosafetyandrescue.com)



Hall Ambulance Service Inc. (Grand Jury photo)



(4X4 vehicle) Liberty Ambulance Service, Progressive Ambulance Inc. (Grand Jury photos)



Mutual Aid Agreement allows for extra help outside Kern County (Grand Jury photos)



Kern County Fire Department, Special Equipment (Photo, <http://kerncountyfire.org>)



Mercy Air Transport (Photo, www.airmehods.com/air-medical/program/mercy-air/)

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF KERN

TRACKING PAGE

May 23, 2023

TUESDAY - 2:00 P.M.

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COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

- CA-42) Proposed response to Grand Jury report entitled Department of Public Health - Emergency Medical Services (Fiscal Impact: None) - APPROVED; AUTHORIZED CHAIRMAN TO SIGN CORRESPONDENCE
Couch-Perez: All Ayes

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISORS

Phillip Peters District 1
Zack Scrivner..... District 2
Jeff Flores District 3
David R. Couch District 4
Leticia Perez..... District 5



KATHLEEN KRAUSE
CLERK OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Kern County Administrative Center
1115 Truxtun Avenue, 5th Floor
Bakersfield, California 93301
Telephone (661) 868-3585
TTY Relay 800-735-2929

May 23, 2023

The Honorable J. Eric Bradshaw, Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Dear Judge Bradshaw:

Transmitted herewith is the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury's Final Report titled Department of Public Health – Emergency Medical Services.

The Board of Supervisors appreciates the Grand Jury's review and input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flores", is written over a horizontal line.

Jeff Flores, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

JF/SH/COMPL_GJ Public Health A

Attachment

cc: Grand Jury

Kern County Board of Supervisors
Response to Grand Jury Final Report
Public Health – Emergency Medical Services

Response to Findings F1-F15:

Kern County agrees with the Grand Jury's findings.

Response to Recommendation:

R1: The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Kern County Public Health Department should organize and coordinate a countywide job and information fair to recruit new paramedics and EMTs to fill the void in the emergency response teams. Coordination should include the ambulance providers, KCFD, Community and vocational schools in the area. The first job and information fair should be completed by September 1, 2023.

This recommendation will be implemented. The Department will organize and coordinate a countywide job and information fair with ambulance providers, Kern County Fire, and community and vocational schools within Kern County. Our first planning meeting will be held in June of 2023 and the first job and information fair will be held prior to September 1, 2023.

R2: The EMS should continue to expand the Tele911™ System, so the public and first responders are more comfortable with its use. The EMS in conjunction with the ambulance companies and Tele911™ should negotiate with insurance providers to allow for compensation for its use when transportation is not necessary. The first negotiation session should be completed by September 1, 2023.

This recommendation will be implemented. Negotiations have begun with Kern Family Health Care. The Department will continue to promote the use of Tele911™ at Kern County EMS System Collaboration meetings.

R3: The EMS should coordinate with Harvey L. Hall EMS Academy, Kern County Fire Department, and Bakersfield College to recruit more candidates in the paramedic profession. This should be completed by September 1, 2023.

This recommendation will be implemented. The Department will coordinate with the Harvey L. Hall EMS Academy, Kern County Fire, and Bakersfield College to recruit more candidates into the paramedic profession. Our first meeting will be held in June of 2023.

R4: The EMS should advertise and inform the public of the importance of 911 call system as to when to use it and when to transport oneself to medical care. The first public announcement should be completed by September 1, 2023.

This recommendation will be implemented. The Department will re-run our Only Call 911 in a True Emergency collaborative campaign on social media and on our website. We will hand out Only Call 911 in True Emergency campaign infographics at health fairs and other events attended by Kern County Public Health staff. We will also monitor call volumes, and as we see significant increases, we will run the Only Call 911 in True Emergency campaign public service announcement on television and in movie theaters.