Communication to the Members of the Suffolk County Legislature

October 7, 2011

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of the members and constituents of the Suffolk Regional Emergency Medical Services Council (REMSCO), we have been asked to contact you and the other members of the legislature in a timely manner regarding the serious impact of the proposed 2012 budget contractions on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division of the Department of Health.

As you may already know, REMSCO is the NY State legislated oversight body for the EMS system in Suffolk County, comprised of more than 30 representatives from both the Public and Private sectors, representing the doctors, nurses, Fire Department EMS, Ambulance Corps, Police, and other parties that participate in providing Emergency Medical Care to the residents of Suffolk County.

The EMS Division is responsible for the organization, training, and ongoing coordination of the entire EMS response in Suffolk County. With over 110 different EMS agencies and over 5,000 providers from EMT–Basic through Paramedic, the proper functioning of the EMS Division is critical to the health and well being of our residents in their everyday life.

It must be stressed that the EMS Division is part of the Department of Health, and not the Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services. This is a necessary distinction, since the role of physician control and medical oversight is critical and a legal requirement for delivery of Emergency Medical Care. In this light it is crucial to recognize that the EMS Division is not just an administrative division, but an active participant in the delivery of the ambulance service in Suffolk County.

The EMS Division is currently working with a minimum staff, consisting of 11 personnel (with 4 FT Grade 23 personnel) who are responsible for many critical functions including:

- EMS Instruction and Certification
  - Original EMS Courses
  - Refresher EMS Courses
  - Instructor Courses
  - CME (Continuing Medical Education) courses and program coordination (Note: The CME program, which is critical to providers with limited discretionary time, yet who volunteer as EMTs with our agencies, would be placed in serious jeopardy by these cuts)

- Contractual Coordination
  - Mutual Aid Contracts
  - EMS Communications
  - Quality Assurance
  - Protocol Education (NYS)
  - Program Agency (NYS)

- Contractual Assistance
  - REMSCO
  - REMAC (Regional Medical Advisory Board)
Medical Control (with University Hospital)

Last year with over 117,000 EMS emergencies in the County, Medical Control was involved in 22,763 of these responses, mostly in an Advanced Life Support capacity.

With just short of 1.5 million people residing in Suffolk County, the impact of the Emergency Medical Service is critical to the infrastructure, and dilution or diminution of services would have a major negative impact on our County.

The currently proposed budget will demand a reduction of personnel by three employees, of which two will be at the Grade 23 Level, whose personnel are Senior Instructors. This would require the elimination of many of the instructional services. There is a direct relationship between the ability to certify providers and the available numbers of EMTs and Paramedics for the ambulance response from all agencies (FD, VAC, Proprietary, PD, etc.). Put simply, these proposed cuts will severely impact our ability to preserve the delivery of ambulance response in the County for years to come.

I would ask that you help us with this issue, as time is of the essence. My vice-chair and I are available to meet with you at your earliest convenience to share additional data and help clarify the situation even further.

We can be reached all hours at (516) 702-5786 (Edward Boyd) and (631) 928-9098 (Jay Gardiner).

Yours truly,

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Hon. Edward J. Boyd, Chair          Jay L. Gardiner, Vice-Chair
Suffolk REMSCO                     Suffolk REMSCO