



Austin-Travis County EMS Staff Findings Regarding Renewal of  
City of Austin  
Non-Emergency  
Medical Transfer Franchise for  
American Medical Response of Texas, Inc.

February 7, 2018

**Background**

In order for a private ambulance company to provide non-emergency transfer services within the limits of the City of Austin, the provider must hold a franchise from the City. Non-emergency transfers typically occur between skilled nursing facilities and hospitals, and are usually prescheduled by medical personnel. Currently, two companies hold such franchises, Acadian Ambulance Service of Texas, Inc. and American Medical Response of Texas, Inc. (AMR) and a third, Allegiance Mobile Health, is pending approval by City Council to obtain a franchise.

American Medical Response of Texas Inc. (AMR) has held a franchise with the City of Austin since 1996. On September 28, 2017, Austin-Travis County EMS received an application from AMR requesting a renewal of the franchise for another five-year term. All the required application elements have been submitted and the application fee has been paid in full.

**Application Review**

AMR has maintained their franchise in good standing since 1996. Their headquarters, at 3601 Bluestein Drive which is well located to provide service throughout the Austin area. All ad valorem taxes on this property have been paid in full.

RLI Insurance Company holds a current performance bond of \$10,000. Worker's compensation and Auto Liability is carried by ACE American Insurance Company, the General Liability is carried by Continental Casualty Company at levels that meet or exceed those required by the franchise ordinance. The City of Austin is named on both the performance bond and the certificate of insurance 10-2-43.

**Vehicles**

AMR currently has 18 ambulances for City of Austin franchise calls. Inspections by ATCEMS revealed that the vehicle inspected meet basic standards for emergency ambulances based on federal ambulance specifications, as well as general ambulance manufacturing standards. Odometer readings were all well within the limits of 150,000

miles as specified by Chapter 10-2. All of the franchise ambulances inspected are either 2011 or newer. The specialty vehicle for pediatric and neonatal services were excluded from the review.

Vehicle inspections were completed on four of AMR's franchise vehicles. All of the vehicles inspected were noncompliant with the required stocking due to not having a commercial tourniquet as required for BLS ambulance in TAC rule §157.11. Since, the time of the inspection the missing equipment has been added to the fleet.

#### **§ 10-2-82 VEHICLES**

***(5) Each vehicle to be used as a medical transfer vehicle shall be equipped as required by 25 Texas Administrative Code, § 157.11.***

There were also issues concerning the vehicles outside appearance. Per the management of AMR, of the 18 units, 9 vehicles are branded with the St. David's Hospital logo. This branding of the AMR vehicle is considered a violation of multiple areas of the City of Austin ordinance Chapter 10-2 and is under further review at the current time and discussions will be ongoing.

#### **§ 10-2-82 VEHICLES**

***(4) Each medical transfer vehicle shall be marked distinctly with the name of the company providing transfer service. Vehicles may not display the words "ambulance," "Emergency Medical Services," "EMS," or the EMS "Star of Life" logo.***

ATCEMS staff concluded that AMR branded units directly violate 10-2-82. AMR's name is very small and creates confusion on what company is doing the transport. There is also a large "Star of Life" logo on all branded vehicles. The Star of Life logos have been removed from the fleet.

Preventive maintenance and repair records reflect a strong preventive maintenance program and all inspected vehicles had undergone preventive maintenance within acceptable timeframes. All of the franchise vehicles were current on their vehicle registrations, state emissions inspections and ambulance inspections. AMR and all of the franchise ambulances hold the appropriate current licenses through the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) which are valid through 01/31/2020.

#### **Staffing**

AMR currently employs 111 personnel, 70 Emergency Medical Technicians certified at the Basic level (EMT-B's) 1 certified at the Intermediate level and 40 Paramedics. All state certifications are current and no suspensions or revocations were found for the company or its employees.

The review identified four personnel that do not meet the Texas Driver License requirements per Chapter 10-2.

***§ 10-2-83 PERSONNEL (A) Each vehicle shall be attended by at least two currently state-certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Each EMT shall hold a valid Class C Texas driver's license.***

**Patient Care Reports**

ATCEMS reviewed 250 patient care records for service provided by AMR. Staff reviewed 16 different data points, including response times, level of service provided, medical coding, origin and destination and Medicare/Medicaid compliance. There were a couple issues identified during the review. Six accounts have mileage that was overstated on the PCR which may have resulted in the mileage fee being over charged. AMR staff is investigating these findings to determine if a refund is necessary. There were five PCRs that were non-compliant with the ETRAN transport protocols established by the Chief on Oct. 1, 2013. AMR management has taken the appropriate steps with the One Call center to improve compliance.

**Public Convenience**

ATCEMS believes that the public convenience will be served by renewing this franchise. AMR has held a City of Austin franchise in good standing since 1996. From January 2016 through December 2017 AMR reported a total 17,907 unit responses to non-emergency medical transfers within the Austin city limits.

**Conclusions**

ATCEMS recommends approval of this franchise renewal for a five year term. AMR has proven over the past 5 years that they can provide satisfactory service to the Austin community. Call volume levels indicate that two franchise providers are necessary to handle the demand for non-emergency medical transfers. Failure to renew this franchise will result in only one franchise holder for the City of Austin.