

Memorandum



Date: February 27, 2025

To: Honorable Chairman Anthony Rodriguez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(3)
March 18, 2025

From: Daniella Levine Cava *Daniella Levine Cava*
Mayor

Subject: Report Regarding Private Ambulance Rates – Directive No. 220746

Executive Summary

This report is in response to Directive No. 220746 sponsored by Senator Rene Garcia, and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) as Resolution No. R-434-22 on May 3, 2022, directing the Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW) to do an annual investigation into private ambulance rates. DTPW analyzed the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach market, which increased by 2.67% from October 2023 to October 2024. If private ambulance rates were adjusted by this percentage, they would remain competitive with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department (MDFR) rates for most categories but exceed them in the Specialty Care Transport and Oxygen category.

DTPW does not recommend rate adjustments this year due to the minor impact of the CPI increase, administrative inefficiencies, and feedback from private providers indicating a preference for stability amidst current economic conditions. This decision ensures alignment with the resolution's focus on fairness and reflects that private ambulance rates typically affect third-party payers rather than individual consumers.

Background

Chapter 4, Article I of the County Code sets forth regulations governing air and ground ambulances and emergency medical transport vehicles. Pursuant to Section 4-7 of the Code, all rates shall be established by the Board after a public hearing. The Code also provides that all private ground ambulance rates shall be uniform among all certificate holders.

The current rate schedule for private ambulance providers was approved by the Board in October 2022, after a period of 18 years in which the rates remained unchanged. DTPW staff conducted an analysis of the CPI data for the period between October 2023 and October 2024 and determined that the CPI for all urban consumers for the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach market has increased by 2.67% for all items during this period. In addition, since October 2022, the CPI decreased by 0.55% and 7.6% for Transportation and Fuel, respectively, and increased by 3.5% for Medical Care Services.

The private ambulance providers' current rates are similar to the rates currently in effect for MDFR, adopted in 2011 as memorialized in Implementing Order No. IO 4-127. For comparison, the table below shows current private rates, MDFR rates, and what the new private rates would be if the Board decided to adjust the rates to the same level of the CPI increase for all items. The adjusted rates remain competitive with MDFR rates for most categories but exceed them in

Specialty Care Transport (+12.75%) and Oxygen (+11.36%). Adjusted rates for BLS and Mileage services are significantly lower than MDRR rates.

Transport Level/Other Charges	Current Rate Private Providers	Current Rate plus 2.67% CPI	Current MDRR Rate	% Difference with MDRR if adjusted
Basic Life Support (BLS) Base Rate	\$550.00	\$564.68	\$800.00	-29.41%
Emergency Basic Life Support (BLS) Base Rate	\$600.00	\$616.02	N/A	N/A
Advanced Life Support (ALS) Base Rate	\$800.00	\$821.36	\$800.00	2.67%
Advanced Life Support (ALS) 2 Base Rate	\$862.53	\$885.55	\$900.00	-1.6%
Specialty Care Transport (SCT)	\$988.38	\$1,014.76	\$900.00	12.75%
Mileage Rate	\$10.85	\$11.14	\$15.00	-25.73%
Oxygen per tank or fraction thereof	\$32.55	\$33.41	\$30.00	11.36%
Waiting Time				
BLS per ½ hour	\$110.00	\$112.93	N/A	N/A
ALS per ½ hour	\$150.00	\$154	N/A	N/A
Special Handling				
BLS	\$43.40	\$44.55	N/A	N/A
ALS	\$86.80	\$89.12	N/A	N/A

DTPW does not recommend an increase in the rates during the current year as the rates were changed in October 2022 and annual changes create administrative inefficiencies for providers. Moreover, private ambulance providers indicated that they were not in favor of an increase due to the current economic/inflationary conditions. MDRR also indicated that its rates would remain unchanged this year. Private ambulance rate increases have little impact on individual consumers because ambulance transports are typically paid by Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance. Uninsured patients account for less than 5% of the total patients being transported annually. The slight CPI increase and current economic conditions outweigh the need for annual adjustments.

Pursuant to Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda. Should you require additional information, please contact Josiel Ferrer-Diaz, P.E., DTPW Interim Director and CEO at (305) 679-0090.

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