
Dear Members of the Board,

In response to a request made by the Washoe County District Board of Health at both the March and April 2022 meetings, we are presenting this letter as affirmation of REMSA Health's support for the regionalization of fire and emergency medical services in Washoe County, as well as the concept of REMSA Health being reorganized as a governmental agency. Our belief is that we have reached a window of opportunity; the agencies involved have recognized that each of us have a common goal which today is inclusive of cooperation and coordination towards modernizing our collective public response system. I would like to expand on a few of the factors contributing to this position.

Across the country, EMS agencies - particularly private ambulance providers - are confronting some of the most challenging pressures in the history of the industry - and REMSA Health is no exception. From an exhausted and shrinking labor pool, to record-setting 911 responses and transports, from limited funding availability to unprecedented inflation, and from antiquated reimbursement models with Medicare and Medicaid to commercial insurance providers paying around 70 percent of billed charges, out-of-hospital healthcare providers like REMSA Health must reconsider their business structure.

Year over year, REMSA Health is running approximately 12 percent higher on responses and 8 percent higher on transports. Our current situation is this: in May 2022 our communications center handled an average of 700 inbound calls per day. Which translates to an average of 310 responses per day with 170 patient transports per day. To compare these numbers to May 2019 we handled an average of 473 inbound calls per day with an average of 207 responses and 136 patient transports per day. In May 2022, REMSA Health's monthly fuel cost was \$110,000, compared to \$48,000 from that same time last year. While REMSA Health continues to focus on recruiting and retaining paramedics and EMTs, staffing shortages are still critical. Sister agencies across the country - from San Diego to Syracuse - are struggling with this and it's making headlines almost every day. Since the beginning of 2022, REMSA Health has tracked 112 news stories reporting on the EMS staffing shortage.

We are working at the local, state and national levels to address all of these difficulties. However, right now, Washoe County has a special opportunity to make a meaningful impact on many of these challenges by working toward regionalization of fire and emergency medical services. Discussions about regionalization will be complex and must include action now to send the closest responder. REMSA Health supports consolidated dispatch in conjunction with response regionalization. REMSA Health has supported Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District by dispatching fire and medical resources for that agency; and TMFPD has assisted us with medical and transport coverage in outlying areas of the county. Given these partnerships, REMSA Health is prepared to have conversations and put energy into consolidating dispatch and formalizing regionalization - including a move toward bringing REMSA Health under a government agency. These actions will contribute greatly to sustaining REMSA Health's long term financial viability, as well as the level of out-of-hospital healthcare in our community.

The REMSA Health team and I look forward to participating in the next steps.



Dean C. Dow
President and CEO
REMSA Health

cc. Tim Nelson
REMSA Health, Board Chairman