

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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INTERIM FIRE CHIEF

April 1, 2014

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 14-032

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: James G. Featherstone, Interim Fire Chief

SUBJECT: "SUPER USERS" PARTNERSHIP WITH LOS ANGELES COUNTY EMS  
AGENCY

FINAL ACTION: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## SUMMARY

At the December 3, 2013, Board of Fire Commissioners Meeting, the Board directed the Department to provide information relative to efforts being made to address the issue of persons that access 911 emergency medical services (EMS) on a frequent basis. This report is intended to provide information regarding our partnership with the Los Angeles County EMS Agency and efforts being made to address these "Super Users."

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:  
Receive and file.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Information regarding the fiscal impact of providing required services to EMS "Super Users" is extremely difficult to quantify as the City receives reimbursement for many of the resulting ambulance transports provided. Additionally, ambulance rates are set to capture full cost recovery for all provided services.

## DISCUSSION

A review of Department patient data for calendar year 2013 identified 20 patients having a total of 2,049 Department patient contacts which resulted in 1,375 ambulance transports. These "Super Users" ranged in age from 20 to 89 (11 females and 9 males) and their service requests were received from geographical areas throughout the City.



On November 14, 2013, Cathy Chidester, the Los Angeles County EMS Agency Director, met with Medical Director, Dr. Eckstein, Assistant Chief Reynar and Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Lieutenant Lionel Garcia (Commander, LAPD Crisis Response Support Section). During this meeting the impact of pre-hospital "Super Users" and development of a possible EMS Agency multidisciplinary pilot program that may be beneficial in addressing this issue was discussed.

Subsequent meetings with both the EMS Agency and Lieutenant Garcia have been held including a site visit of the LAPD's Crisis Response Support Section on January 21, 2014. These meetings continue to focus on evaluating available options to assist in reducing the number of "Super User" patient contacts.

Additionally, on February 14, 2014, the Fire Chief was invited to join a task force led by Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey. The task force is evaluating available mental health services for persons being encountered by first responders that ultimately end up in hospitals, jails and the court system. Efforts include identifying best practices, the need for additional educational opportunities for emergency responders, law enforcement and court officials, and other programs that may be beneficial in helping to better address the needs of mental health patients.

EMS "Super Users" and their impact on resource availability is not unique to the City and is experienced by urban EMS and hospital providers throughout the country. Many "Super Users" have legitimate medical complaints that require pre-hospital care and ambulance transport to a hospital. Options being evaluated by other agencies include the deployment of phone lines staffed by nurses at dispatch centers to provide medical guidance and care alternatives thus eliminating the need for emergency response, Nurse Practitioner staffed vehicles and community paramedicine programs.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Department will continue to assess options that may be effective in helping to address the impact of EMS "Super Users." Additional meetings have been scheduled with the Los Angeles County EMS Agency, the LAPD Crisis Response Support Section and the District Attorney's Mental Health Task Force in furtherance of this effort.

Board report prepared by Gregory Reynar, Assistant Chief, EMS Division.