

September 1, 2015



RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

August 19, 2015

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 15-095

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: NURSE PRACTITIONER RESPONSE UNIT (NPRU)

FINAL ACTION: ☐ Approved
☐ Denied

☐ Approved w/Corrections
☐ Received & Filed

☐ Withdrawn
☐ Other

SUMMARY

On April 14, 2015, the Los Angeles City Council approved funding for the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Nurse Practitioner Response Unit (NPRU). The NPRU is a novel, innovative, one year pilot program that was funded through the Mayor's Innovation Fund. The NPRU will be staffed with a nurse practitioner (NP) and a Firefighter/Paramedic (FF/PM). This provides the team of an independent clinician NP, who is experienced in providing primary care and urgent care along with a trained FF/PM, who is experienced in providing emergency care and is familiar with LAFD and EMS policies, procedures and operations. The NP has a much wider scope of practice and autonomy than paramedics, and thus they can perform a comprehensive patient assessment on scene, including a number of diagnostic evaluations, obviating the need for ambulance transport to an Emergency Department (ED).

Goals of the NPRU

1. To decrease the rate of 9-1-1 utilization by "EMS super users." The NPRU will work with identified "EMS super users" in order to perform comprehensive needs-assessments and schedule follow-up for preventive care at the appropriate clinics.
2. To decrease the number of ambulance transports. The NPRU will respond to selected low-acuity EMS incidents and perform a rapid, expanded patient assessment with the goal of accomplishing a treat and release/treat and refer of these patients, thereby eliminating the need for ambulance transport to an ED.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file.

FINDINGS

The NPRU will be housed at Fire Station 64 and will operate on a 4/10 schedule, from 0800 to 1800 hours Monday through Thursday. The NPRU will be staffed by a FF/PM and an NP Supervisor. The FF/PM was selected after a notification and interview process, and will be detailed for a one year period to work full time on the NPRU. The NP Supervisor is a full-time, non-sworn civilian employee. The anticipated implementation date of the NPRU is September, 2015, once the NP Supervisor position is approved and the emergency appointment is completed. The NPRU responses will be limited to Battalion 13.

The NPRU will have two primary goals:

1. Perform scheduled visits with pre-identified EMS super users who live in Battalion 13 to address their chronic healthcare issues in order to arrange preventive care to decrease their utilization of 9-1-1.
2. Respond non-emergency to low acuity patients to perform a rapid patient assessment and disposition with the goal of treating and releasing the patient on scene without the need for ambulance transport.

FISCAL IMPACT

The NPRU has been funded through the Mayor's Innovation Fund for \$245,000, which covers the cost of the salaries of the FF/PM and NP Supervisor assigned to the NPRU, and partial funding of a contract physician who will assist with providing medical control.

CONCLUSION

The NPRU is a 12 month trial program to provide an innovative approach to EMS super users and low acuity patients. By staffing the NPRU with an experienced Nurse Practitioner who has a wide scope of practice and an experienced FF/PM, the NPRU will provide a higher level of care to our patients while decreasing ambulance transports, decreasing wall time, and increasing resource availability.

Board Report prepared by Marc Eckstein, M.D., LAFD Medical Director