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February 01, 2006

Mr. Joe Van Oosterhout
Marquette County Central Dispatch
180 US 41 East
Negaunee, MI 49866

Dear Mr. Van Oosterhout:

I read with interest the letter submitted to you regarding the dispatching of EMS resources utilizing the "closest car concept" from Mr. Hendra at MGH. At MediRide, Inc. EMS, we are truly thankful for the hardworking, mostly volunteer, community-based EMS resources. We know they provide an important and integral role to the Marquette County EMS community and the residents that they serve.

Despite the assertion by Mr. Hendra, the Emergency Telephone Service Enabling Act (9-1-1 Act) and the Marquette County Medical Control Authority protocols are very clear when they describe the dispatching of EMS resources. Unfortunately for MGHS, they are not in a position to dictate the rules to Central Dispatch (CD) or any other agency, so that they suit their purposes.

As I'm sure you are aware, the MQT County protocol (Part 2, Section 2, page 7 of 16, Heading Q, sub-heading 1) states, **"Ambulance services shall be immediately dispatched to any reported medical emergency or request for medical assistance utilizing the "closest available ambulance" procedure within their approved service area."** This would mean, for example, that if MGHS had a rig stationed at Sawyer, and a call for assistance came from Sawyer, Central is legally bound to dispatch that MGHS unit to the request as they would be closer to that call for help than Forsyth EMS (in their current location) or Skandia/West Branch EMS. This is both the law in the State of Michigan as well as the protocol for Marquette County. Would it be best for the patient to wait for a local unit's crew to be paged in and get to the scene when there could potentially be a staffed unit right around the corner?

There are further contradictions in Mr. Hendra's letter. In one area he states that he wishes the local units be dispatched in the same way they are now, and then he asks that you "consider the right of the public to choose and receive the benefit of the closest care resource allocation." Which do they choose?

In our initial dispatching discussions, MGHS balked at the "closest car concept," as they were not the closest units, again, now they've changed their minds. Initially CD stated they would not dispatch "closest car concept" as the state law and county protocols mandated, now, however it also seems as though it's acceptable. I ask, why is this? A new CAD system? Initially, I had plotted out the locations and provided them to you clearly showing the locations our agency was closer to. MGHS did not like this arrangement and insisted, along with CD that the MOU be put into place. In order to maintain some type of professional courtesy, we foolishly agreed to allow CD to bend the rules even though it was not a benefit to our agency. We cannot, and will not allow this to happen again. We must insist that CD follow the laws and protocols and we will be forced to bring legal action against Marquette County Central Dispatch if the laws are not followed.

It was the choice of Marquette General Health System to disband the MOU between our two agencies. Because of this, and their plans to locate EMS resources throughout our respective service areas, they, in turn, must deal with the negative political fallout that comes with that choice. I understand that some community-based EMS agencies would have concerns regarding this issue. After all, MGHS EMS will be taking runs and revenue from their community agencies.

March 4, 2010

After discussion and consultation with both our legal advisors and the State Attorney General's office, it is the consensus opinion that the law and the rules cannot be changed to benefit one company over another. By allowing the MOU in the first place, CD put themselves into a tenuous legal position. It is our feeling that there should be no change in the current "alternating" dispatch arrangement, despite the cancellation of the MOU by MGHS. If you would like to discuss this further with me, I would be more than happy to meet with you. Please contact me at 906.226.4565. Thank you.

Respectfully,



David L. Guizzetti, BHA, NREMT
President & CEO

CC: Skandia / West Branch MFR's
Sands Township EMS

Forsyth Township EMS
Negaunee Township Fire MFR's
Powell Township EMS
Marquette Township Fire MFR's
Marquette City Fire Dept.
Al Hendra, MGHS