



VIA HAND DELIVER AND EMAIL

Dr. Christian Zuver
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RE: Objection to Florida Ambulance Service, d/b/a Florida Medical Transport COPCN Application

Dr. Zuver:

Pursuant to Ordinance 2022-19 section 20-94, RG Ambulance Inc. d/b/a American Ambulance hereby files this objection to the Application of Florida Ambulance Service (hereinafter “FMT” or the “Applicant”) for COPCN to operate BLS interfacility service within Orane County. This objection is timely under section 20-94 (b) because it has been within 14 days of the County’s notice of the Application.

Summary of Objection

The application submitted by “FMT” is both deficient in required information and insufficient in its description of the benefits of the proposed service for the population of the county or the population of some geographic area of the county where the applicant will provide its proposed service. As discussed more fully below, there is no verifiable need or necessity within the County as the current providers are exceeding expectations for the current demand for services.

Applicable Standards and Grounds for Objection

In reviewing the application for COPCN, Section 20-93 (5), “A statement describing, with reasonable certainty, the geographic area proposed to be served and how the applicant’s proposed service will benefit the population of that geographic area”. The Applicant stated, “they continue to hear of concerns with the current availability of BLS/ALS providers and most are experiencing wait times upwards of 4-6 hours and beyond”. The Applicant provided letters of support that resembles an attempt to disguise “cut and paste” template from several nursing facilities. The supportive letters came from the very facilities that were invited to participate in Two (2) previous county surveys. I would suggest that the allegation of such delays be uncovered in either the results of the survey or within the data submitted by all the private providers annually. The applicant further states “patients will benefit by being able to utilize a trusted provider that can provide BLS transports which are covered by Medicare”. Within the application and with the letters of support,

one would conclude that the Applicant is suggesting charges below the Medicare Allowable rate structure as well as the intent to submit claims for medical appointments (Physician Office) which are uncovered destinations. The Applicant states "Residents will also greatly benefit by improving turnaround times from the current local industry standards". What are the local industry standards? The applicant fails to provide any factual data to support this statement. Orange County currently requires such alleged extensive delays to be reported.

Additionally, and in accordance with section 20-95 (1) EMSAC must consider the number of providers currently providing services and the type and quality of service provided. In doing so, and in accordance with section 20-95 (4), the results of the most recent county survey are to be considered.

The current system has *Eight (8) providers that are licensed as inter-facility transport agencies. Both BLS and ALS certifications are held by all. This is a current community standard of care. The addition of another BLS ONLY provider will lower the standard of care within the county as well as further degrade the ability of the current providers ability to attract, employ and retain qualified licensed EMS personnel. Five (5) of the current providers have been issued COPCN's over the past 24 months thus having put a strain on the current interfacility transport system. The addition of another provider will be unrevivable and have a reverse effect than what the Applicant states.

It is our recollection that the most recent survey conducted in December 2023 suggests that hospital systems, nursing homes and other health care institutions **do not** see EMS service or response times as an issue in Orange County. Furthermore, it is our understanding that only seven (7) surveys were completed out of more than a hundred facilities in Orange County. The results of the survey, through lack of participation as well as the submitted responses would NOT suggest that the county should consider additional providers.

The Applicant focuses on a perceived need to "bring better quality BLS service to the clients we serve" without providing any factual data that would demonstrate the current providers are not meeting the needs of the community. The applicant further states "patients will benefit by being able to utilize a trusted provider that can provide BLS transports which are covered by Medicare reimbursement." The statement is concerning in so far as to suggest all BLS transports are covered by Medicare when in fact many do not meet the requirement of medical necessity for a legitimate payable claim. Patients could quickly see their insurance claims denied and left with a significant out of pocket expense because the Applicant may have failed to qualify the medical necessity for non-emergency ambulance transport.

Basic Life Support treatment and transportation is more than the administration of oxygen. The recent emphasis of the BLS skill set, such as airway management and CPR over the past year in Orange County further demonstrates this.

RG Ambulance Service, Inc. d/b/a American Ambulance has an outstanding reputation in Orange County and the surrounding communities. To date we have not received one single complaint of service or violations from the Division of Emergency Medical Services in two decades.

For the reasons identified, RG Ambulance Service, as an existing provider of ALS/BLS interfacility service provider in Orange County, respectfully requests that the Application of Florida Ambulance Service d/b/a Florida Medical Transport be denied.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B. Eberhart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Eberhart
General Manger

*National Health Transport, Rocky Mountain Holdings, Affordable Transport, American Medical Response, AdventHealth EMS, Trident EMS, American Ambulance and HCA. Date of COPCN issuance not available at time of draft.