

## **SUMTER COUNTY FIRE RESCUE**

### **Discussion / Direction: Increasing Level of Service to ALS First Response**

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

For members of Sumter County Fire Rescue who are State-Certified Paramedics and approved by the Medical Director to be able to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) procedures to patients needing same, when on-scene prior to the arrival of EMS Transport Ambulances, and continuing to assist the patient with advanced care procedures upon the arrival of EMS Transport. The primary goal is to provide the patient with the highest level of Emergency Medical Care available from properly certified and approved providers as early as possible in a medical or trauma emergency and continue care seamlessly until the patient is stabilized or arrives at the appropriate receiving medical facility.

#### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

Sumter County Fire Rescue has a total of 9 State Certified Paramedics and 50 State Certified EMTs within its membership. Of these, 6 Paramedics are full-time employees (including the 3 Shift Commanders) and 20 EMTs are full-time employees. To be able to provide EMS First Response, SCFR must have a written agreement with a Medical Director (State licensed M.D. or D.O.) who will oversee the provision of emergency medical care, provide written medical protocols for SCFR EMTs and Paramedics to follow, agree to be available for quality assurance, and evaluate skill levels for EMTs and Paramedics authorized to provide emergency medical care under his / her license. The latter usually involves didactic testing and skills evaluation, along with additional field "internship" under the supervision of a "Preceptor" or "Field Training Officer" authorized by the Medical Director. The Medical Director may participate in any or all of the above as he or she deems necessary.

As SCFR now has 3 full-time Shift Commanders and 2 Staff Chief Officers holding State Paramedic Certification, now is the time to initiate the implementation of ALS – Medical First Response for those providers that are qualified to do so. We currently have 2 full-time Firefighters active in a local Paramedic Training Program and recently hired a dually certified Firefighter – Paramedic as a full-time Firefighter. We are poised to be able to implement at least one full-time ALS First Response Unit by October 1, 2010. At that time, SCFR could seek its own Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("COPCN" - which is approved by the Sumter County BOCC), to provide ALS – First Response in Sumter County and have its own contract for Medical Direction. Until that time, under State of Florida Rule and Administrative Code we have the option of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an entity that currently holds a COPCN for Advanced Life Support in Sumter County. Currently those two agencies are; Lake-Sumter EMS and The Villages Public Safety Department. Following are discussion points on the advantages of each.

## **Lake-Sumter EMS**

### ADVANTAGES:

1. Current provider of transport service
2. Crews would work under same protocols as transport provider
3. Current provider of disposable medical supplies

### DISADVANTAGES:

1. Has established a model for ALS – First Response based on Lake County Fire Department's established staffing patterns – not the SCFR Combination Model
2. Protocols are designed for a Transport service, not First Responder ALS
3. Long timeframe to get a Paramedic cleared to function as solo medic – time based
4. L-S EMS Requires a new MOU or Agreement for SCFR to provide ALS
5. Majority of Continuing Education classes held in Mt. Dora – requiring extended travel time
6. Would require the establishment of a separate EMS QA process/program
7. Medical Direction for Lake-Sumter EMS oversees in excess of 600 clinical care providers – our members equal about 10% of their overall concern

## **The Villages Public Safety Department**

### ADVANTAGES:

1. VPSD and SCFR share the same vision for the provision of ALS care
2. Competency Based Paramedic Evaluation = Shorter timeframe to clear personnel to function as solo medic
3. Continuing Education classes held regularly in Sumter County – less travel time
4. Currently a partner agency through Interlocal Fire Automatic Aid agreement
5. Protocols tailored to ALS First Response (non-transport)
6. Will provide initial EMS QA oversight through existing process in Sumter County
7. Will add to the common operating elements of SCFR & VPSD, further improving agency interoperability.
8. Medical Direction for The Villages PSD oversees 64 clinical care providers = closer oversight of our 9 Paramedics and 50 EMTs - nearly equal personnel with VDPS

### DISADVANTAGES:

1. May need to acquire disposable medical supplies directly from vendors

Based on the above comparison, staff recommends that SCFR partner with The Villages Public Safety Department for Medical Direction and Quality Assurance oversight to allow SCFR personnel to initiate First Response ALS patient care at this time.