

Ukiah Valley Medical Center  
275 Hospital Drive,  
Ukiah, CA 95482

February 8, 2018

Ms. Carmel Angelo  
County Executive Officer  
County of Mendocino  
501 Low Gap Road  
Ukiah, Ca 95482

Dear Ms. Angelo:

I am writing this letter in response to the County considering discontinuing its partnership with Coastal Valleys EMS Agency (CVEMSA). I believe that the quality of EMS services delivered in the county would be adversely affected by this change.

CVEMSA has been delivering services in the area for over 20 years. The agency has contributed in many ways that may not be apparent to the Board of Supervisors. CVEMSA has continually delivered training and expertise that I do not think a stand-alone County agency could match. One of the benefits of having an experienced agency delivering services is that they are not just learning how to do the job; they are excelling in that job. CVEMSA is not just meeting the mark in delivering oversight; it delivers high-quality services and is an innovator in the field. CVEMSA has been recognized as such by the State of California, regularly participating in the state level policy development processes and initiatives. Such participation and inclusion in these processes allows CVEMSA to advocate for the needs of the rural communities within the areas it serves. Such engagement ensures new protocols and therapies are more available based on the established track record of the oversight agency.

CVEMSA also does a great job in coordinating care between the hospitals in the greater Lake, Mendocino and Sonoma area. As you know, the nearest level 2 Trauma center is in Santa Rosa. Under the guidance of CVEMSA all of the local hospitals participate in trauma review. Under a single county EMS Agency would that continue; probably, however I fear that the coordination between individual hospitals in a split system would suffer.

The development of a single county EMS Agency is an ambitious endeavor. I have no doubt that it can be done. How much would that cost? It will certainly be more expensive in terms of dollars spent on staff, however that is not the kind of capital I fear will be spent. There is no allowance for a learning curve, and no large pool of experienced LEMSA staff to take up where CVEMSA ceases to function in the capacity of our LEMSA.

I would encourage the Board of Supervisors to address any concerns it has with CVEMSA in order to resolve the issue before trying to develop a single county EMS agency. It would be unfortunate indeed if the issues Mendocino County is concerned about would be issues under any LEMSA. If that is the case, substituting an inexperienced, potentially understaffed entity in place of the existing LEMSA will only delay solutions to the problems we are facing today.

Sincerely,

Gary Fausone M.D.  
EMS Service Chief,  
Director, Department of Emergency Services

cc.

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors  
1st District Supervisor Carre Brown  
2nd District Supervisor John McCowen  
3rd District Supervisor Georgeanne Croskey  
4th District Supervisor Dan Gjerde  
5th District Supervisor Dan Hamburg  
Mendocino County Emergency Medical Care Committee  
Coastal Valleys EMS Agency