

**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION**

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy Funding Appropriation

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*Fire Department*

**DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL****DIRECTION**

With the coming of new revenue from 2020-2025 King County EMS Levy funds, staff seeks Council direction to prepare an Ordinance that would appropriate additional budget and authorize positions in the CARES Mobile Integrated Health Unit (5.5 FTEs) and Basic Life Services (2.0 FTEs) for a total of 7.5 FTE positions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Direct staff to return with an Ordinance appropriating additional budget and authorize an increase of 7.5 FTEs to support the CARES Mobile Integrated Health Unit (5.5 FTEs) and Basic Life Services (2.0 FTEs) for levy supported programs.

**BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS**

The King County EMS system provides essential life-saving services to the residents and visitors of the County. With an international reputation for innovation and excellence, it offers uniform medical care regardless of location, incident circumstances, day of the week, or time of day. The system is recognized as one of the best emergency medical services programs in the country. It is also acclaimed for its patient outcomes, including among the highest reported survival rates for out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients across the nation.

Fire has been working to expand the capabilities of the Mobile Integrated Health team since early 2019:

5/28/2019 Study Session  
Briefing on King County  
EMS Levy

10/7/2019 Resolution in  
support of King County  
Proposition No. 1

6/17/2019 Resolution  
approving countywide  
ballot proposition

Additionally, in 2017 King County mandated implementation of an Electronic Health Record system, changes to medication purchasing requirements, and national drug shortages have resulted in a significant increase in workload for Emergency Medical Services division staff. The benefits of operating in a more advanced technological environment allows the division to track volumes of data regarding patient outcomes, meet federal and state regulations, and documentation recognizing trends both in operational and clinical perspectives. Challenges with technology implementation included the

additional administrative requirements, data entry requirements, staff training, data review and reporting and procurement.

These program enhancements have provided the department with stronger metrics and an enhanced ability to make data-informed decisions and use performance measures effectively regarding patient outcomes, community trends such as pandemics and overdoses, operational data entry, and supply purchasing. Over the course of the past 15 months this increased workload has been prioritized by EMS Division staff by placing medics on special assignment for three-month rotations.

Additionally, the Department's CARES101 response unit has been funded with Limited Term Employee (LTE) positions for approximately two years with temporary grant funds. These funds are now able to be replaced with permanent funding from the newly approved King County EMS Levy beginning January 1, 2020. This new funding is for the life of the levy (six years) and will allow the City to provide Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) responses via a two-team social worker unit to members of the community 10 hours a day, 7 days a week. Currently, only weekday coverage is provided. The Masters of Social worker practicum students, which currently is a resource for the department at no cost, makes up for 5.5 full time employees. These students are required to have a minimum of 1 hours of individual professional development time per week which equals 14 to 20 hours of staff time that the division has difficulty meeting.

With the approval of the current King County Levy (Basic Life Support), EMS Dedicated, BLS revenues will increase by \$1.1 million:

- \$640,000 for Mobile Integrated Health (CARES)
- \$461,000 for BLS

With this increase in levy funding, the department is requesting input in moving forward with hiring and transitioning the following positions:

1. Bellevue CARES Positions
  - a. Hire 1 FTE new CARES Practicum Clinical Coordinator
  - b. Hire 1 FTE new CARES101 Masters level Social Worker
  - c. Transition the existing three Professional Social Workers that staff the CARES101 unit from LTE's to FTE's
  - d. Hire a new civilian .5 FTE CARES Admin Assistant
2. Hire 1 FTE - new civilian Technology Support Position for the EMS Division
3. Add 1 FTE - new Firefighter FTE to EMS Division in an administrative assignment position

The department is requesting a total increase of 7.5 FTEs to support the CARES Mobile Integrated Health Unit (5.5 FTEs) and Basic Life Services (2.0 FTEs) for levy supported programs. All requested positions are revenue-backed and supported for the life of the levy, through 2025.

Staff will return to Council at a later date with the appropriate consent request pending Council direction.

## **POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS**

### **Policy Impact**

There is no policy impact in relation to this request.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Since 1979, the EMS system has been funded through a series of voter approved levies. With the passage of the 2020-2025 King County EMS Levy, Bellevue Fire Department will be receiving additional funding dedicated to BLS services. The EMS levy rate is \$0.265 per \$1,000 of AV for 2020-2025, which would raise \$1.1 billion for the Countywide EMS system over the course of the levy. The 2020-2025 EMS levy will increase funding to the City by \$1.1 million annually during the length of the levy.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Direct staff to return with an Ordinance appropriating additional budget and authorizing an increase of 7.5 FTEs to support the CARES Mobile Integrated Health Unit (5.5 FTEs) and Basic Life Services (2.0 FTEs) for levy supported programs.
2. Do not direct staff to return with an Ordinance and provide alternative direction.

## **ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS**

N/A

## **AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY**

N/A