

# EMS 101

## Structure and Function of the Mendocino County Emergency Medical Services(EMS) System

This presentation provides essential context for the OBBBS's impact on our front-line emergency services.

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Presenters: Coastal Valleys EMS Agency &  
Mendocino County Public Health



# EMS Regulatory Framework

## **State Authority: California EMS Authority**

Oversight, disaster coordination, paramedic licensing.

**Local Authority LEMSA: (Coastal Valleys EMS Agency)** Plans, implements, evaluates local systems; oversees Sonoma and Mendocino Counties

**OBBBA Connection:** The federal OBBBA includes approximately \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts over a decade. These federal changes cascade down, challenging the state's ability to fund Medi-Cal and may impact EMS transport providers reimbursement.

# LEMSA Responsibilities (The EMS Safety Net)

- Certifying entity for EMTs.
- Permitting of ambulance providers & accrediting paramedics.
- Designation of specialty care hospitals.
- Policy development and Quality Improvement.
- Disaster medical response preparedness.

# EMS in Action

## 24/7

### **LEMSA & EMS in Action**

- The 911 Call: PSAP & Dispatch
- First Response: Fire/BLS
- Ground Ambulance: BLS (EMT) & ALS (Paramedic) Transport
- Air Ambulance: Critical Care Transport
- Receiving & Specialty Hospitals

# Dispatch in Mendocino County

## Dispatch, Providers, Facilities

### **Howard Forest ECC:**

- Designated Fire and EMS consolidated dispatch center.
- 24/7 Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)-trained dispatchers provide lifesaving instructions.

### **REDCOM:**

- Identified disaster support dispatch center.
- EMS Duty Officer

Sonoma County partnership.

# Mendocino County Providers & Facilities

## **Ground ALS Providers (5)**

- Adventist Health Mendocino Coast, Medstar, Laytonville Fire, Coast Life Support District, Ukiah Valley Fire Authority

## **Ground BLS Providers (3)**

- Anderson Valley, Covelo, Elk

## **Air Providers (2)**

- REACH 18 & REACH 35

## **Base Receiving Facilities (3)**

- Adventist Health Howard Memorial, Ukiah Valley, Mendocino Coast

## **Alternate Receiving Facilities (2)**

- Redwood Coast Medical Services
- Round Valley Indian Health Clinic

# EMS Funding Reality in the Shadow of the OBBBA

**Revenue Sources:** Service billings and one-time allocated PG&E Disaster Settlement Funds and County EMS Enhancement Funds.

## **Key Challenges:**

- **Reimbursement gaps:** Federal and state payments (Medicare/Medi-Cal) do not cover the actual costs of service. Mendocino County has a high number of Medi-Cal residents. Cuts disproportionately affect these safety-net providers.
- **Cost Shifting:** Higher bills for private insurance subsidize losses from government programs and uninsured patients.
- **Budget constraints:** Reliance on one-time funds and the county's structural budget deficit create long-term sustainability issues for the entire county.

EMS does not receive Measure P funds they are distributed to the fire departments.

# Direct OBBA Impacts on Mendocino EMS

**Revenue Decline:** OBBA eligibility changes could shift patients from insured to self-pay/uncompensated care, potentially reducing ambulance provider revenue by 15% or more.

**Increased Operational Strain:** Loss of access to primary care is expected to cause a surge in low-acuity 911 calls.



# Direct OBBBA Impacts on Mendocino EMS

## Administrative and Regulatory Burdens

- **Provider Tax Cap Reduction:** The reduction from 6% to 3.5% between 2028 and 2032 threatens critical supplemental payment programs (GEMT).
- **New Medi-Cal Eligibility Checks:** Starting in 2026, the reinstatement of asset limits and increased verification will create administrative workload for billing departments and likely cause coverage loss for vulnerable populations.

# System Volume Overview

Total EMS system volume for 2024 was 17,495 incidents

Cal Fire Crystals Report:

**2024**

All Calls in County: 12,911

Less the “Medical” column: 7,572

Plus, the Ambulance report MEDINT 2,519+ Medical 9,637 =  
12,156

Equals: 17,495

**2025 (As of November)**

All Calls in County: 10,728

Less the “Medical” column: 7,049

Plus, the Ambulance Report MEDINT 1,049+ Medical 7,871 =  
8,920

Equals: 12,599



# Call to Action

## Focusing on Sustainability

Addressing this gap is critical to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of local emergency medical services.

Given the county's confirmed structural budget deficit, we must prioritize sustainable revenue solutions over one-time fixes.

# Solutions & Timeline

- **Short-Term:** No immediate solution to increase revenue and sustainability.
- **Medium-Term:** Look at the establishment of JPA's between agencies, pursue federal grants, develop local tax measure proposals. We must actively explore every option, including lessons learned from existing local tax measures like Measure P, to stabilize funding.
- **Long-Term:** Advocate for federal and state policy changes, such as increasing Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement rates.

# EMS 2026 Program Goals

- Evaluation of Performance Contracts for Exclusive Operating Area (911 and Inter-facility Transport Services).
- Evaluation of a JPA for EMS Services.
- LEMSA partnership.
- Re-evaluation of Advanced EMT.
- Evaluation of Alternate Receiving Authorization in Anderson Valley and Laytonville.

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Source: This map was prepared by the Mendocino County Department of Information Services GIS Program, September 14, 2023.  
Note: This map is not a survey product and should not be used to determine legal boundaries.  
In addition to Fire Districts this map includes the Fort Bragg City Fire Department.



# **Questions?**

**Jen Banks, EMT-P**  
**Emergency Medical Services Coordinator**  
**Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator**  
**Coastal Valleys EMS Agency**  
**Tami Bartolomei, Acting Program Administrator**  
**Mendocino County Public Health Services-EMS**