

October 10, 2011

Mr. Neil Brickfield
Commissioner – District 1
Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Commissioner Brickfield:

It is my understanding that the County Commission is considering a proposal to discontinue the ambulance services contract with Paramedics Plus and replace it with fire based medical transport services. As President of Morton Plant Mease Health Care, I see firsthand the impact medical transport services have on our hospitals and the residents of Pinellas County. The keys to success for a medical transport program are (1) high quality providers, (2) short response times that can be guaranteed, (3) up-to-date equipment and technology, (4) a comprehensive, seamless program that can bridge the many localities within Pinellas County, (5) excellent rapport with health care providers, and (6) cost efficient operations. I believe the current arrangement provides the best opportunity to achieve these objectives, and that a change to a fire based medical transport program could hinder the achievement of these goals.

There is no question that our local firefighters are well trained, committed, and do a fantastic job, but I have several concerns with their proposal to take over medical transport services. While I applaud the firefighters' goal of cost reduction, I am concerned that de-centralizing the current program could result in higher costs and an erosion of service levels. It is my understanding that there are eighteen (18) fire departments within Pinellas County. Therefore, having the fire departments assume responsibility for medical transport would require the approval of all eighteen "localities" in order to be effectively implemented. How could the system effectively operate if one of the localities decides not to take on these services for budgetary or other reasons? Even if all eighteen localities agree to take on this responsibility, what mechanism would exist to insure consistency in operations (such as performance standards, medical direction, personnel policies, compensation, and equipment maintenance) across the localities? Our hospitals discharge dozens of patients each day who require medical transport to other facilities across Pinellas County which require patients to "cross" multiple fire department jurisdictions. Without a clear mechanism in place to coordinate these transport services and insure compliance with required transport times, there could be a direct negative impact on the quality of health care in Pinellas County that could manifest itself either through increased backlogs in our emergency rooms or delays in transporting patients to/from hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, physicians offices, and/or their homes.

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OCT 14 2011

NEIL BRICKFIELD
COUNTY COMMISSIONER



October 10, 2011

Page Two

I recognize the budgetary concerns the County faces and I support the Commission's efforts to reduce costs. I would encourage the Commission to maintain the current centralized system and continue its contract with Paramedics Plus. Paramedics Plus has worked to raise the quality of the current system and truly understands the complexities of operating a medical transport service. By working with Paramedics Plus, the County has a much better chance of achieving expense reductions while maintaining a high quality system that does not jeopardize the health care needs of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn Waters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and last name "Waters" clearly distinguishable.

Glenn Waters, President

Morton Plant Mease Health Care

GDW/pjn

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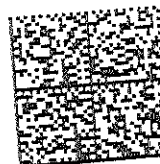


Morton Plant Mease
BayCare Health System

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
300 Pinellas Street, MS #21
Clearwater, FL 33756

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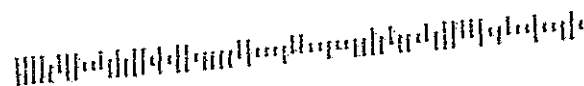


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NEIL BRICKFIELD
Commissioner - District 1
Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

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Edward White Hospital RECEIVED

OCT 18 2011

**SUSAN LATVALA
COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

Date: September 29, 2011
To: Commissioner Susan Latvala, Commission Chair – District 4
From: Roland Metivier, President & CEO
Subject: Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus Contract

Dear Commissioner Latvala:

I am writing this letter to provide our support of Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus for the three year extension of its current contract. It is important to our organization to have an ambulance service that is reliable and meets our transport needs on a consistent basis. It is equally important to have a good rapport with the ambulance service to ensure open communication and collaboration on endeavors that will ultimately improve the service offered to our patients. Our current relationship supports the continuation of ambulance service with Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus.

Over the past seven years our staff and I have worked directly with the local management and supervision team at Paramedics Plus. They received the Florida Sterling Award for Quality, and we support quality measures and timely transport of our patients. Paramedics Plus provides a group of dedicated, professional, skilled and friendly EMT's and paramedics. The Chief Operating Officer, Mark Postma, and I meet regularly to discuss any issues or concerns. Paramedics Plus has demonstrated they are both quality and customer service driven.

Paramedics Plus has provided Pinellas County with exceptional service that balances the needs of two primary customer groups. They provide rapid response and quality care to emergency 9-1-1 patients, as well as timely and compassionate service for inter-facility ambulance transport requests. Ambulance transportation is a Health Care issue rather than a Public Safety issue. The Board of County Commissioners needs to recognize this distinguished difference between an ambulance provider and a fire department system.

Paramedics Plus has been very responsive to our community and has been key in helping to maintain the prestigious reputation of our EMS system in Pinellas County. We support the three year extension of their contract from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly in Administration at 328-6134.

Sincerely,

Roland Metivier
President & CEO

RM/jkb



Morton Plant
Mease Hospitals
St. Anthony's Hospital
St. Joseph's Hospitals
South Florida Baptist Hospital

16255 Bay Vista Drive
Clearwater, FL 33760
www.baycare.org

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October 11, 2011

OCT 17 2011

Susan Latvala
Commissioner, District Four
Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

SUSAN LATVALA
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Dear Commissioner Latvala:

I would like to address the proposal being considered by the Pinellas County Commission to discontinue the ambulance services contract with Paramedics Plus and replace it with fire based medical transport services. Speaking on behalf of BayCare Health System, with facilities located across the tri-county area, a potential change of this nature would have considerable impact on both the hospitals and our residents of Pinellas County.

I believe the current arrangement provides the best opportunity for Pinellas County to maintain high quality services and short response times while keeping equipment and technology up to date -- which will result in a cost efficient operation.

I am concerned that de-centralizing the current program could result in higher costs and an erosion of service levels. Our hospitals discharge dozens of patients each day who require medical transport to other facilities across Pinellas County which require patients to "cross" multiple fire department jurisdictions. Without a clear mechanism in place to coordinate these transport services and insure compliance with required transport times, there could be a direct negative impact on the quality of health care in Pinellas County that could materialize through increased backlogs in our emergency rooms or delays in transporting patients to/from hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, physicians offices, etc.

I recognize the budgetary concerns the County faces and I support the Commission's efforts to reduce costs. I would encourage the Commission to maintain the current centralized system and continue its contract with Paramedics Plus. By doing so, the County has a much better chance of achieving expense reductions while maintaining a high quality system that does not jeopardize the health care needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Mason, President/CEO
BayCare Health System



St. Petersburg General Hospital

TOGETHER, PERFORMING AT A HIGHER STANDARD

October 11, 2011

Mr. Neil Brickfield
Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater FL 33756

Dear Mr. Brickfield,

This is a letter of support for Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus to extend their current contract for the next three years. The current ambulance service is meeting the needs of our community and providing reliable and timely transport for patients in Pinellas County. Our hospital has fostered an open line of communication and collaboration with Sunstar as it relates to patient transfers to and from our facility. I am not aware of any patient or family complaints pertaining to the ambulance services currently being provided which suggests their level of satisfaction with the existing system and response times.

Over the past many years, our hospital staff and physicians have worked directly with the management and supervision teams at Paramedics Plus. Our senior team has participated in ride-a-longs with the Sunstar teams and witnessed the level of professionalism in the field with both patients and families. Likewise, we have observed firsthand the collaboration with the staff of the various fire stations and the smooth and quick transition of patients served as a testimony of the high quality and efficiency of our current EMS system. Our Emergency Department leaders and I regularly communicate with Mark Postma, Sunstar COO, to continuously discuss opportunities to further improve the quality and speed of services to best meet the ever changing needs of our patient population.

Paramedics Plus has been an integral part of development of our EMS system and provided exceptional service and as previously noted worked closely with the fire stations. Not too long ago they received the Florida Sterling Award for quality which was well deserved recognition for their rapid responsiveness, management of the 9-1-1 system and the compassionate service provided to our community. There are distinct differences between an ambulance service and fire department service. Such differences warrant consideration as you deliberate as to how best provide and construct an overall EMS system. Though some common ground exists, each brings a level of expertise the other cannot effectively deliver.

Paramedics Plus has been very responsive to our community and has had a lead role helping to maintain the prestigious reputation of our current EMS system and they have received nationally accreditation status for their efforts. In conclusion, we encourage you to support a three year extension of their contract from October of 2011 to September of 2015. If you have specific questions, please feel free to contact me at 727-341-4801.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Conroy Jr.
CEO

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OCT 14 2011

NEIL BRICKFIELD
COUNTY COMMISSIONER



**St. Petersburg
General Hospital**

6500 38th Avenue N ■ St. Petersburg, Florida 33710

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Mr. Neil Brickfield
Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater FL 33756

TOGETHER, PERFORMING AT A HIGHER STANDARD
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September 15, 2011

To: Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

I am writing this letter to provide our support of Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus for the three year extension of its current contract. It is important to our organization to have an ambulance service that is reliable and meets our transport needs on a consistent basis. It is equally important to have a good rapport with the ambulance service to ensure open communication and collaboration on endeavors that will ultimately improve the service offered to our patients. Our current relationship supports the continuation of ambulance service with Sunstar Paramedics/Paramedics Plus.

Over the past seven years, our staff and I have worked directly with the local management and supervision team at Paramedics Plus. Paramedics Plus received the Florida Sterling award for quality and we support quality measures and timely transports of our patients. Paramedics Plus provides a group of dedicated professional, skilled, and friendly EMTs and paramedics. The Chief Operating Officer, Mark Postma, and I meet regularly to discuss any issues or concerns. Paramedics Plus has demonstrated that they are quality and customer service driven.

Paramedics plus has provided Pinellas County with exceptional service that balances the needs of two primary customer groups. They provide rapid response and quality care to emergency 9-1-1 patients, as well as timely and compassionate service for interfacility ambulance transport requests.

Paramedics Plus has been very responsive to our community and has been key in helping to maintain the prestigious reputation of our EMS system in Pinellas County. We support the 3 year extension of their contract from October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Gilbert".

James B. Gilbert
Chief Financial Officer