

MINUTES  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

A meeting of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board (the “Board”) was held on Friday, December 8, 2023, at 10:00 am in the IS&T Conference Room, Lafayette City Hall.

Attendees: Stephanie Arceneaux, Dr. Paul Azar, Lance Beal, Michael Gervais, Chris John, and Karen Rue

Absent: Dr. Anu Desai

Guests: Debbie Sonnier, Executive Secretary to CAO, Cydra Wingerter, Lafayette Consolidated Government  
Troy Guidry, Regional Vice President, Acadian Ambulance and Air-Med Services  
Stephen Olivier, Regional Operations Manager, Acadian Ambulance and Air-Med Services

**Call to Order**

Board Chairman, Dr. Paul Azar, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am in accordance with Article II, Section 7-18 of the Lafayette City-Parish Consolidated Government Code of Ordinances (the “Code”).

Dr. Azar stated that he had not yet heard from the new administration, but did not anticipate any changes. A member of the board asked, and it was confirmed, that the administration has one appointment to the Board, and Dr. Azar is the appointment of the Mayor-President. The other members of the Board are appointed by other entities – the City and Parish Councils have a total of two appointments and the area mayors have one appointment. There are no openings on the Board, and there are no members that are term-limited as of the time of this meeting. There are five members “up” in 2025.

**Approval of Minutes**

Copies of the May 3, 2023 meeting minutes were provided to Board members for review. Upon completion of the review of the minutes, motion was made by Board member, Karen Rue to accept the minutes of the May 3, 2023 meeting of the Board. The motion was seconded by Board member, Michael Gervais. There was no further discussion and the vote was as follows:

Yeas: Stephanie Arceneaux, Dr. Paul Azar, Lance Beal, Michael Gervais, Chris John, and Karen Rue

Nays: None

Absent: Dr. Anu Desai

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Acadian Service Contract and Rates**

Troy Guidry, Regional Vice President, was in attendance to answer questions from the Board.

Guidry stated as of the meeting date, the rates had not yet been decided. He reminded that over the last several years, the rate increases for Lafayette Parish have remained at the three percent (increase as allowed per the contract), while last year, the contracts went up nine and half percent (with other parishes). Acadian is not sure what the rates will be this upcoming year, although there is a state law that passed that will allow them to get 325 percent of Medicare rates,

which is a minimum of \$1,500 per emergency, while Lafayette is at \$1,269, and the rates are at \$1,700 in many of the other parishes they serve, so Lafayette is about \$500 below the base rate of what Acadian charges everywhere else.

Stephanie asked how a rate change affects people's insurance reimbursement to which Troy said it's about 70 percent Medicare/reimbursement. He said the last time they asked the Council for an increase, only about seven or eight percent of people would be affected. He further said that they are in contract with about 95 percent of commercial insurances and they pay \$900.

He said he will have to come back to the group with the rate increase. He reminded that the three percent is what's in the contract and is automatic without the need for approval from the Board or Council. Guidry said insurance, equipment, wages, and fuel costs have gone up for Acadian. It was reiterated that the current contract allows for an automatic three percent increase and there is a provision that allows Acadian to ask for an increase over the three percent that has to be first approved by the Board and then by the Councils.

Guidry said the three percent increase on an ambulance emergency at the current rate of \$1,269 would be an additional \$38.07 per emergency, mileage would go up \$.80 and the BLS would go up \$25.83 to \$886.

Karen questioned the average cost per emergency as well as the proposed rates.

There was discussion about rates for across parish lines and Guidry explained that the contract rates only apply to transports with an origin and destination within Lafayette Parish. In instances of going to or from other parishes, the final destination rate is applied.

Guidry stated that in 2010, the average cost of an ambulance was \$145,000, and today the cost is \$294,000; stretchers used to be \$10,375, and at the end of 2022 they cost \$24,276, for an increase of 133 percent; cardiac monitors were \$22,560, and 12 years later they are \$39,275, which is an increase of 74 percent; tires went up 79 percent from \$120 per tire to \$215; ventilators went up from \$9,115 to \$17,000, which is an 87 percent increase.

Guidry stated the non-emergency Medicare rate was \$237 is now \$249, which is a 10.8 percent increase. The new law that just passed allows Acadian to collect 325 percent of Medicare allowable, which would bring the rate to \$1,500, and Lafayette Parish's rate is still \$1,269 per emergency. Karen asked for clarification that the client is responsible for what Medicare doesn't pay and Guidry confirmed that is correct for private insurance, and Acadian can only accept what Medicare pays and if they have supplemental insurance, the supplemental would bear the cost. Guidry said they also have contracts with the insurance providers, and while by law they can charge 325 percent of Medicare rates, Acadian negotiates rates individually with providers.

Acadian pays for employee training, and their retention rate is 73 percent as compared to the national retention rate of about 56 percent. Acadian has increased the number of new recruits in training, and Guidry said the year before last year they had about 800 new trainees, last year they had about 1,200, and this year they have about 2,000 trainees. The attrition usually happens between years one through three and after five years, employees seem to stay longer.

Guidry restated that he will have to come back to the Board with the new proposed rate.

Dr. Azar said the increase in traffic volume in the parish must have an affect on response times. Guidry said it can be difficult and there are other factors like wall time and wait time at the hospitals as well. Staffing is the biggest problem in the hospitals today which results in a large number of empty beds. Guidry stated that it has improved since COVID and Acadian continues to meet quarterly with the hospitals to address the issues.

Michael asked Troy to explain/define “being on the wall”. He responded that being on the wall is waiting in the hallway of the hospital. Acadian gives the hospital twenty minutes to find a bed and at the end of the twenty minutes the unit is put back in service.

Dr. Azar stated that we have not done our part in medicine in the hospital. It has become a public health issue and it has to come from the physicians and hospitals. The increase in the number of walk in clinics has helped allowing the hospitals to deal with more serious issues.

There was extensive discussion regarding the increase in fentanyl overdoses in the Parish. Lance Beal spoke of how much he has learned regarding the overdoses and commended the Acadian Medic and his impressive testimony at Beal’s first murder conviction. He noted that we are seeing more and more of the street drugs being laced without the kids knowledge with a large amount coming from across the border. With the fact that the effects can be felt within twelve minutes it was asked if there was a way to propose to have more Narcan available. The possibility that those with a liquor license can carry the medicine.

Karen suggested that the board make a recommendation to the new Administration for licensing and educating the businesses and ask Acadian to promote on site Narcan. Guidry seconded the recommendation. Olivier with Acadian stated there has been an increase in the number of overdose calls. There has been 856 overdose calls in Lafayette Parish this year with 417 having Narcan administered.

Dr. Azar commented that he would like to set up a meeting with the new Administration to discuss.

It was noted that if necessary the board would meet again before the end of the year to review the increase in rates and prepare a statement.

**Other Business**

Dr. Azar opened the floor for any other business.

Chris John recommended that all, especially in the medical field, watch Five Days at Memorial which depicts the heart wrenching decisions the medical professionals had to make in New Orleans at Memorial Hospital following Hurricane Katrina.


Dr. Azar congratulated and thanked the Board as well as Acadian for the service that they have given and congratulated all for doing something good for the community. He stated that things are going in the wrong direction nationally and maybe we can do our part to fix it and hopes that we continue to expand our scope of what we do and make it better for Acadiana.

There being no other business, a motion was made by Board member, Chris John to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Board member, Karen Rue. There was no other discussion, and the vote was as follows:

Yeas: Stephanie Arceneaux, Dr. Paul Azar, Lance Beal, Michael Gervais, Chris John, and Karen Rue  
Nays: None  
Absent: Dr. Anu Desai

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.

  
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Stephanie Arceneaux  
Board Secretary