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- **Montgomery County will have agreements with area hospitals to provide insurance information** for patients who are transported. A third party billing company will be contracted by the County to collect the fee from the insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid. Overhead cost will be less than 10 percent.

The quality of patient care will continue to be the highest priority for Montgomery County's Fire & Rescue Service. A resident's ability or non-ability to pay will never be considered when providing service.

When a resident makes that 911 call, the first priority will be to take care of that patient's immediate medical needs. If deemed necessary, the patient will be transported to the hospital. If not, the EMS fee will not be charged to the insurance company.

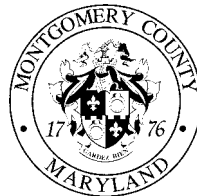


If you have questions or concerns about the proposed EMS fee, **contact Scott Graham in the Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service at 240-777-2493 or scott.graham@montgomerycountymd.gov.** For information about fire and life safety education programs or non-emergency fire and rescue issues, call 240-777-2400.

“Time is right for ambulance fees... Those opposed to the fee have argued that people in need might hesitate to call 911, but no such reduction in calls has been noted in other jurisdictions that use the fee.”

---Gazette Editorial, 2009

EMERGENCY HELP Dial 911



Montgomery County
Office of Public Information
www.montgomerycountymd.gov



Emergency Medical Services Transport Fee

Strengthens Services and
Saves Lives with
No Bills to Residents



“Most neighboring counties have ambulance fees, and there's no evidence that residents are reluctant to request ambulances as a result...County residents – even the uninsured – wouldn't pay a penny... It works for other counties, and there's no reason to believe it wouldn't be successful in Montgomery.”

---Washington Post Editorial

Montgomery County's emergency medical services (EMS) are world class, and it is important that we do everything possible to keep them that way. Unfortunately, it's not easy as we are facing increasing resource demands and decreasing revenue due to current fiscal constraints.

The choices are clear. Either a dedicated revenue source is needed to help keep our emergency medical services first class, or taxes may have to be increased to make up the difference.

An EMS fee will keep our emergency medical services strong. It is projected to raise at least \$14 million a year. One hundred percent of the net proceeds will be dedicated to meeting the rising costs and increasing resource demands, and to fund enhancements. New fire apparatus, additional staff, new stations in the growing upcounty area, and incentives for volunteer opportunities will all be supported by the EMS fee.

Here are the facts:

- **An EMS transport fee will raise \$14-\$17 million a year in revenue** that will be dedicated to maintaining and enhancing Montgomery County's world-class emergency medical services.
- **All out-of-pocket costs for County residents are already covered by tax dollars -- County residents will not see a bill for ambulance services.** The fee will be billed directly to residents' insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid which have already factored the cost of patient transport into their rate schedules.
- **Montgomery County is one of the few jurisdictions in the region that is not already (or in the process of) collecting an EMS fee** from insurance companies. Fairfax County collects the fee, as well as Frederick, Prince George's, Carroll, Charles, Anne Arundel, Arlington, and Washington counties. Cities such as Alexandria, Baltimore, and the District of Columbia also collect the fee. All told 17 out of 24 Maryland counties collect an EMS fee, and 54 out of 95 Virginia counties also bill.



- **There is no evidence that those in need of transport will be dissuaded from calling 911** because their insurance is going to be billed or because they are uninsured. In the jurisdictions that have been collecting this fee, there is no evidence of that happening. Montgomery County will fund a public education campaign to make sure that residents

know that they will not receive a bill for any out-of-pocket expenses, since those will be covered by their taxes.

- **There is no evidence that EMS transport fees will raise insurance rates.**

Ambulance bills are in the "hundreds" of dollars, compared to hospital, physician, surgeon, rehab, device, and drug bills, which are typically in the "thousands and

tens of thousands." Ambulance expenditures account for less than 1 percent of insurance expenditures. Since most insurance companies determine rates on a regional basis – and most jurisdictions in the region bill insurance companies for this charge -- in most cases County residents may already be paying for ambulance service as a part of their premiums.

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