



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen  
Director

November 24, 2014

The Honorable Isiah Leggett  
Montgomery County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) would like to convey our continued strong support for the mission of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) and for the MCFRS personnel who provide our County with high quality fire, rescue and emergency medical services (EMS). Outlined below, the MCCAB submits to you our input for the Master Plan currently being drafted and urge MCFRS to focus on the following two areas: (1) Define key priorities (2) Establish a data-driven approach that captures and analyzes performance data, outcomes, and trends emerging in our community.

### **Define Key Priorities**

The MCCAB recommends the following three key priorities be reflected in the Master Plan which also represent core expectations Mid-County residents have of MCFRS functions:

- Emergency medical services
- Response time for all types of incidents
- Residential fire response and prevention

Other specific areas to consider in addition to the key priorities include:

- Fires in businesses, institutions and community buildings
- High-rise fires
- Service to populations having special needs
- Pedestrian safety
- Homeland security
- Staffing levels

### **Establish a Data-Driven Approach**

In assessing final priorities, we urge that the new Master Plan continue to emphasize performance metrics and a data-driven approach to drive decisions on performance improvement. This is not only consistent with encouraging outcome-oriented performance management, but it is essential for the continued effective delivery of key services that are responsive to the needs of the community as they change over time. The MCCAB believes

that a data-driven approach to the Master Plan will continue to focus attention on improvements in protocols and resources in other areas, which also will make a difference in lives saved over time. Important data to track under this data-driven approach should include:

- **EMS Patient Data:** EMS patient data should be tracked and incorporated into the Master Plan. In 2010, the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS) presented jurisdictions with the option of participating in Neuroprotective Hypothermia Protocol, which allows MCFRS to provide a cooling mechanism to those patients whose circulation was restored in the pre-hospital setting. In recent years, medical research has found that in patients who experience a quick return of spontaneous circulation, the cooling helps preserve brain function, resulting in a better long-term outcome for them. In 2010, MCFRS began collecting patient outcome data. It is important that the Master Plan track patients' conditions past emergency room arrival for long term survivability statistics to assess the progress of MCFRS in helping patients by delivering this importance service, and whether that service can be improved. We also recommend the tracking of EMS lifesaving equipment to ensure proper allocation of such equipment in order to reduce the number of residential fire deaths and reduce the number of needed trips to the hospital.
- **EMS Outcome Measures Data:** This data may be particularly appropriate since the electronic patient care reporting system adopted by MCFRS is relatively new and, like any new system, additional adjustments may be needed. Process measures such as EMS response times should accompany these outcome measures, provided that they have a demonstrated impact on patient outcome. The MCCAB recognizes the technical complexity of patient outcome measures. We recommend continued coordination with stakeholders, such as hospitals, in developing practical outcome measures.
- **Other Data and Emerging Trends:** The MCCAB also asks that the Master Plan track and account for other types of data, demographic and economic in nature, that will further shape the types of services delivered by MCFRS, including:
  - The increasing numbers of facilities for senior citizens may have a bearing on better addressing the community needs and the delivery of services.
  - The growing number of retirement communities and related new building structures for these communities in the Mid-County area.
  - The growing number of new buildings constructed via lightweight construction, including properties built with lightweight, combustible components that burn quickly and fail easily under high temperatures.
  - What changes will be addressed in the Master Plan to reflect the special needs of a growing number of senior citizens and non-English speaking residents in the County?
  - What changes will be made to reflect the growing number of high rise buildings, and the greater density and mix of commercial and residential buildings in the County?

- What changes, if any, need to be made to the Master Plan in light of the County's recently enacted legislation allowing MCFRS to seek reimbursement for ambulance transports from private health insurance companies, Medicare, or Medicaid?

The MCCAB is grateful to MCFRS personnel whose life-saving efforts contribute to the quality of life that makes Montgomery County a great place in which to live. Yet, we must continue to be able to measure the contributions of MCFRS if we are to assess how its services can be made even more effective. Hence, we ask that you review and incorporate these recommendations into the new Master Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kieran McHargue", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kieran McHargue, Chair