

## Response to Questions on the FY 2010 Advertised Budget Plan

**Request By:** Supervisor Cook

**Question:** What are the differences between outfitting Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances? What are the salary differences for staff on each?

**Response:** BLS ambulances are staffed with Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and transport patients who do not require extra support or cardiac monitoring. Functions performed by a BLS ambulance include: administration of oxygen and other non-invasive techniques such as splinting broken bones; administering glucose for mild hypoglycemia; and basic wound management.

ALS ambulances are staffed with a Paramedic and transport patients who need a higher level of care above those services provided by a BLS ambulance. An ALS ambulance carries tools and equipment similar to that which is found in a hospital emergency department or critical care unit. ALS ambulances carry critical care equipment including: a 12-lead EKG monitor and defibrillator; an external pacemaker; tools to draw blood; pre-hospital medications; advanced airway equipment with specialized monitoring equipment; and additional supplies. Functions performed by an ALS ambulance include: in-depth patient assessments; cardiac monitoring and evaluation; defibrillation; advanced airway maintenance such as intubation; drug administration; and intravenous (IV) therapy.

### Equipment

The additional cost of tools and equipment required to stock an ALS unit versus a BLS unit is \$47,000. The majority of the cost difference is related to the 12-lead defibrillator device carried on ALS units (approximately \$35,000/device) versus an automated external defibrillator (AED) device carried on BLS units (approximately \$4,000/device).

### Salary

- BLS units are staffed with two certified EMTs at an estimated annual salary cost (not including benefits) of \$107,025.

Per the EMS redesign currently underway:

- ALS Non-training units are staffed with one certified EMT and one certified ALS paramedic at an estimated annual salary cost (not including benefits) of: \$136,858.
- ALS Training units are staffed with two certified ALS paramedics at an estimated annual salary cost (not including benefits) of \$176,794.

The department staffs 14 ALS Training Units and 27 ALS Non-training Units. Training units are placed at high call volume stations and staffed differently in order to provide ALS interns and employees on work improvement plans the opportunity to practice skill development.