



Legislation Text

File #: 19-1106, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive and file a report on the status of Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance vacancies in the City of Long Beach; and

Request City Manager to explore and implement solutions to restore BLS 12 and 13 to daily service as soon as possible and prepare a long-term plan that addresses staffing shortages for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

The Fire Department's BLS ambulances transport patients who do not require immediate medical intervention by paramedics, but who require or request transport to a local emergency room. The BLS ambulances are staffed with nonsworn Ambulance Operators who hold an EMT license and are either full-time or part-time employees. The Long Beach Fire Department (LBFD) typically operates three BLS ambulances on 24-hour shifts and two BLS ambulances on 12-hour shifts during daytime hours when call volume is heaviest.

Currently, the LBFD is experiencing a shortage of BLS personnel, as many fire departments are hiring for fire positions, in addition to ambulance operator companies and departments. This shortage has limited the LBFD's ability to cover all shifts on the 12-hour BLS ambulances.

While the hiring process in Long Beach takes several months for thorough vetting and training, the City expects the BLS shortage to be resolved in January 2020. In the interim, the LBFD has made the decision to take BLS Ambulance 12 (located in Council District 9) out of service on days, in which an insufficient amount of staff is available and proposes to rotate this reduction between BLS 12 and BLS 13 (located at Fire Station 13 in Council District 7) beginning in mid-November. This temporary staffing change will remain effective until additional operators are in place. It is anticipated that response and transport times may be impacted throughout the city, as the BLS ambulances respond citywide.

Therefore, the City Council is requesting the City Manager explore alternative solutions to the temporary reduction of BLS services.

Statement of Urgency

The request for an update on the BLS Ambulance staffing shortage is critical to equitable access to emergency services.

No Financial Management review was able to be conducted due to the urgency and time sensitivity of this item.

Approve recommendation.

REX RICHARDSON
COUNCILMEMBER, NINTH DISTRICT

ROBERTO URANGA
COUNCILMEMBER, SEVENTH DISTRICT