

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 22-0562

Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached letter on behalf of HASC.

May 16, 2022

Councilmember Mike Bonin, Chair
Councilmember Paul Koretz, Vice Chair
Councilmember Joe Buscaino, Member

Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: **Item # 1 (CF# 22-0562)** Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) report relative to adjusting fees charged to the public by private ambulance companies and other non-ambulatory passenger vehicle services in the Non-Emergency Medical industry.

Dear Members of the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee,

The Hospital Association of Southern California (HASC) represents over 180 member hospitals and 35 health systems, all with a common goal: to improve the operating environment for hospitals and the health of the communities they serve.

The non-emergency transport of our patients between health facilities is an integral part of the patient continuum of care and often one that can be challenging depending on the needs of patients.

Item #1 on the Transportation committee agenda reflects a significant increase in the cost of non-emergency transportation of patients in the City of Los Angeles, that has been developed through a messy process with little opportunity for input from the hospital community. While we understand the need for fees to reflect rising costs, we believe the City should develop a transparent process with input from all impacted parties, similar to those used in other jurisdictions.

HASC created a working group of impacted hospitals to work with the City. Unfortunately, we were given little opportunity to contribute to the LADOT process. We were told there was a survey performed of the private ambulance transport services. However, it appears LADOT chose to survey just a short window of time in December 2020, which was at one of the highest surges of hospitalization during the pandemic. As a result, the transport activity reflected was way above normal levels and specific services like “ambulance wait time” were terribly exaggerated due to the increased number of COVID patients in hospitals. A week of service during the height of the pandemic is not reflective of the usual private ambulance services under non-pandemic circumstances.

Although we were in discussions with LADOT prior to the DOT Commission approval, we were given no notification that the item was moving forward and was approved without our opportunity to provide hospital input to the Commission.

We ask that the City Council Transportation Committee:

- 1) Request that LADOT create a regular process for rate increases that is fair, based on current service and transparent to all parties impacted.
- 2) Develop private ambulance rates that are considered the maximum amount allowed and permit the hospitals and private ambulance companies to negotiate their individual rates. This is the process used by Los Angeles County and all other jurisdictions.
- 3) **Recommend that the rates before you today move forward as a maximum amount allowed so that the hospitals and private ambulance companies can begin negotiating agreed upon rates.**

On behalf of the hospitals in Los Angeles City, we ask that you support our requests. We appreciate the ongoing collaboration and stand ready to work with the City on any issues impacting our members or the care they provide Angelenos.

Sincerely,



Adena R. Tessler
Regional Vice President for Los Angeles County
Hospital Association of Southern California