

Statement by

Angelo Salvucci, M.D.,

Medical Director, Emergency Medical Services, Santa Barbara County

to the

State of California Little Hoover Commission.

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Good Morning Mr. Speaker and Commission members. My name is Dr. Angelo Salvucci, and I am the medical director of emergency medical services for the County of Santa Barbara. Local emergency medical services are part of the disaster planning efforts of counties. I have been asked to discuss the following:

1. How the Santa Barbara County EMS Agency has determined the existing level of emergency response capability.
2. What changes we are considering in light of recent events.
3. How the State should assist local EMS agencies to prepare for disasters.

Prior to September 11, we had the following disaster preparedness structure and activities in place:

- 1. Disaster Preparedness Advisory Committee**
 - Members include representatives from all county hospitals, ambulance providers, fire departments, local police and sheriff, FBI, Red Cross, Direct Relief International, UCSB, Vandenberg Air Force Base, Amateur Radio Emergency Services and the County's Office of Emergency Services
 - Organizes two functional disaster drills per year
- 2. Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator**
 - Part-time position
- 3. Public Health Department disaster preparedness needs assessment**
 - An all risk public health assessment CDC tool
- 4. Pilot project with UCLA to improve disaster medical readiness.**
 - Developed and conducted Public Health Department all risk assessment tool
 - disaster response training program for all Public Health Department staff

- 5. State grant for disaster planning with medically fragile populations**
 - We are one of a few counties to have such a plan
- 6. Terrorism Working Group**
 - This committee was established several years ago to improve disaster coordination between Health, Fire, Law and HazMat, especially in a terrorist event, and to develop a terrorism annex to the Multi Hazard Functional Plan.
- 7. Public Health Department Bioterrorism workgroup**
 - Implemented over a year ago to improve PHD response and readiness in the event of a BT attack
- 8. Partnered with Fire/OES to fund communication equipment and decontamination equipment for health professionals through State OES grant (\$68,000.00)**
 - Funding for medical supplies includes communication equipment and a 4 nozzle decontamination unit for one north county and one south county hospital
- 9. State bioterrorism grant (\$15,508.00)**
 - Funded curriculum development and training, supplies
- 10. Facilitated county-wide 5-day Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) training**
 - 70 persons from multiple municipalities and various community based disaster response organizations were trained through this program
- 11. Participation in Disaster Medical Services System Standards Development Advisory Group**
 - EMSA block grant-funded project

Since the events of September 11, we have done the following:

- 1. Accelerated all disaster preparedness activities.**
 - Increased interest from all participants
 - Volunteers
- 2. Convened an ad-hoc bioterrorism committee**
 - Led by County Administrator
 - Participation of all local stakeholders

3. Developed a Rapid Assessment Team (RAT) team

- Responds to credible bioterrorist events (by local risk assessment) not believed to be high risk by FBI
- HazMat, Public Health Nurse, Fire, Law Enforcement representatives
- Microbiologist, Deputy Health Officer available 24 hours
- More recently, with improved communication with FBI, this may not be needed. All agencies will use OES-prepared protocol.

4. Increased education to hospitals and emergency departments

- Talks by Health Officer
- Educational binder distributed

5. Purchased Phase contrast microscope

- Rapid screening of suspected biological substances
- Field tests not sensitive or specific
- Supplement to

6. Developed enhanced training and equipment for EMTs and paramedics

- Chemical terrorism
- State EMS Authority will fast-track applications

How the State can assist local EMS agencies:

First, the spirit of teamwork and cooperation has never been better, and all of the state resources have been very willing to do what they can. The state can help in two ways:

1. Funding: We received \$15,508 as a CDC bioterrorism grant last year, which we used for equipment and for training. We have requested an additional \$400,000 to fund:

- Upgrading our public health lab to Level B
- Staffing with a full-time microbiologist
- Full time disaster coordinator
- Enhanced biological and chemical terrorism community surveillance system

2. Wireless E-911:

In an emergency, if someone calls 911 from a wireline phone the call would be routed immediately to the appropriate public safety dispatch center and the dispatcher would automatically know the exact location of the caller. But, with a wireless phone, the 911 call is sent to the regional Highway Patrol dispatch center, and the dispatcher must ask the caller to describe their location. The call is then transferred as needed to the right place. This creates delays and inefficiencies on our 911 system.

There is no time when wireless E911 is more important than in a disaster. For example, in Manhattan on September 11 the wireline system was shut down and communication was only through wireless phones. During a disaster we want to know where a 911 caller is located and respond efficiently. We do not have that system in California today.

The wireless telephone carriers are either ready or close to ready to send location information to the dispatch centers. But, the dispatch centers need to be able to receive and make use of the information. The Department of General Services plans to use the money in the Emergency Telephone Number Account to fund this project.

The Emergency Telephone Number Account are the 911 charges collected from wireless and wireline telephone subscribers. For the last several years, there has been a surplus in the account. At this time it is about \$80 million. The surplus is earmarked for use over the next three years to implement a wireless E-911 system.

But, during the budget process, there has been a lot of discussion about transferring this surplus into the general account. If that were done, it would prevent the implementation of a wireless enhanced 911 system in our state.

The State could help by:

1. Preventing the transfer of funds from the account
2. Enacting a new statute that permanently protects the account, so we can continue to upgrade our emergency communications system.

I appreciate your concern for the health and safety of all Californians. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.