

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023 [X] Consent [] Regular
[] Workshop [] Public Hearing

Department: Fire-Rescue

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: the write-off of uncollectible emergency transport patient accounts to remove these amounts from the County's general ledger for the following period:

October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 (FY 2019) in the amount of \$13,075,365.90

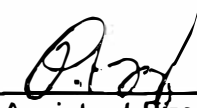
Summary: In December 1994, the Board authorized Fire Rescue to transport critically ill/injured patients and bill for those services. The County contracts with a private company for these billings and collections services. The County receives payment from a number of sources, including commercial insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and private individuals. During the period October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019, Fire Rescue generated \$53,757,189.71 in gross transport billings and collected (to-date) \$24,978,646.05. After adjustments of \$15,703,177.76, required under the guidelines of the Medicare/Medicaid programs, the balance of \$13,075,365.90 is currently deemed to be uncollectible. This balance is primarily due to partial payments, insurance denial based on medical necessity, the inability to obtain accurate patient and/or insurance information, and patients without medical coverage or high deductibles. Staff recommends the amount deemed uncollectible be written-off the County's general ledger.
Countywide (SB)

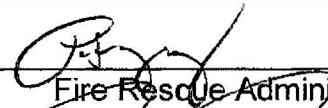
Background and Justification: In March 1995, Fire-Rescue began transporting patients and charging ambulance fees for this service. Fire Rescue's billing efforts are designed to meet the federal requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. The law requires that the County make reasonable attempts to collect monies from all patients regardless of the availability of insurance, to the maximum allowed under Federal and State guidelines and does not allow for the routine waiver of unpaid co-payments or deductibles, unless certain requirements are met. Based on these efforts, Fire Rescue collected 66% of net charges to-date for this write-off period.

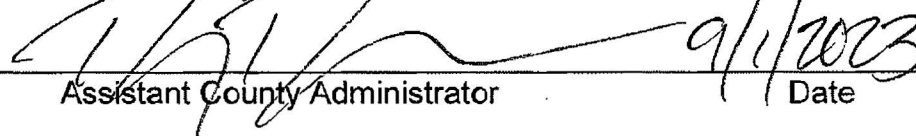
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Attachments:

1. Emergency Transport Billing Write-Off Summary for Period October 2018 - September 2019
2. Detail Listing of Uncollectible Accounts by Transport Month for Period October 2018 - September 2019

Recommended by:  _____ 8-21-2023
For Assistant Fire Chief Date

Approved by:  _____ 8-21-2023
Fire Rescue Administrator Date

Approved by:  _____ 9/1/2023
Assistant County Administrator Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Capital Expenditures	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Operating Costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
External Revenues	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Income (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In-Kind Match (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
NET FISCAL IMPACT	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes X No _____
 Does this item include the use of federal funds Yes _____ No X

Budget Account No.: Fund 1300 Dept 440 Unit 4210 Rev Source 4260

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. The approval of this item will authorize the Clerk of the Courts to record the necessary accounting entries to remove these accounts from the financial records. As required under PPM CW-F-048, Fire Rescue will continue to maintain a database of all emergency transport accounts.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: Sam Magieriski 8/17/23

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Development and Control Comments:

Lisa Maut 8/22/2023
 OFMB 9A 8/22/23

J. J. [Signature] 8/29/23
 Contract Development and Control

B. Legal Sufficiency

[Signature] 8/30/23
 Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

 Department Director

Summary: (Cont'd)

The \$13,075,365.90 is the outstanding balance after adjustments are applied to patient accounts. Primarily, adjustments are the difference between the Fire-Rescue billing rate and the maximum reimbursement allowed by Medicare and Medicaid.

The following provides examples as to why the billings may be uncollectible:

- Partial Payment - received payment from third party carrier, but patient did not have supplemental insurance and has not paid balance.
- Insurance payment denied based on medical necessity - Fire Rescue's decision to transport an injured or ill patient is based on quality of patient care as determined by the paramedic/Medical Director, not on the likelihood of a successful collection. In some cases, patient did not pay account.
- Billing agent unable to obtain accurate/sufficient patient information.
- Patients had no insurance, co-insurance, or had not met their deductible.