

City of La Crosse Explores Ambulance Service

It's an idea that's been talked about for more than five years, now the issue has come to surface once again-the La Crosse fire department getting involved in emergency medical services.

La Crosse Fire Chief Gregg Cleveland says, "This has been an age-old question because of the instability of the emergency medical services program that has previously been in place."

And while Cleveland praises Tri-State for their services, he thinks the system can get even better. The city would be looking at paying for firefighters' EMT training, and other start-up costs, but Cleveland says the benefits would far outweigh the price, and if there is a way to improve services, they're ready to explore them.

Chief Cleveland says, "If we can devise a system that maintains or hopefully enhances the quality of care, what's wrong with that?"

But officials at County Tri-State Ambulance say there's a lot wrong with that, beginning with clinical and economical risks.

Tri-State Director Matt Zavadsky says, "The risk the city is looking at is taking is huge because you've got the clinical risk of bringing in less qualified personnel to the scene, not having dual paramedics, not having folks with ten years of experience and 6500 patient experiences under their belts."

The fire department believes they can be a strong asset in EMS. They say they want to work with County Tri-State Ambulance to provide the best possible patient care...but the one thing both organizations have in common is a shared goal.

Zavadsky says, "We want to make sure that the quality care that's brought to the patients in La Crosse tomorrow is as good or better than it is today."

There is no formal proposal for starting up a city-run ambulance service yet, but the La Crosse Fire Department remains optimistic and ready to better the system...

Cleveland says, "Why shouldn't we make something better? That's it in a nutshell."

Updated: 2007-05-22 16:44:50

