



IAEMSC

International Association of Emergency Medical Services Chiefs

For Immediate Release

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IAEMSC Staunchly Opposes the City of Columbus, Ohio Proposal to Trade Patient Safety for Marginal Fiscal Savings

Baltimore, MD – The Officers and Board of Directors for the International Association of Emergency Medical Service Chiefs (IAEMSC) today announced their unanimous staunch opposition to the proposed reduction of service by the City of Columbus (OH) from a high performance Advanced Life Support (ALS) provider to a reduced capacity Basic Life Support (BLS) response program.

Mayor Michael Coleman, with the support of City Council President Michael Mentel, and other members of Council, commissioned the Columbus Economic Advisory Committee (EAC) to analyze the fiscal condition of the City. In the EAC report released on March 5, 2009 the recommendations for fiscal savings is a proposal to reduce the level and quality of patient care to the community. This proposal is an “ill conceived & short sighted” cost saving strategy that will have untenable negative impact upon the health and safety of the community if instituted.

Our review of this document found that of the fifteen (15) committee members none are medical professionals. The decision to alter a medical standard of care is a serious decision that requires informed deliberations and the expertise of the medical community to reach an appropriate medically based conclusion. Anything short of that professional paradigm is reminiscent of a quick fix scheme that marginalizes the protection of the community and diminishes the importance of having medical professionals driving policy that impacts medical practice.

The present standard of care in Columbus is a robust Paramedic provider ALS system provided through the City of Columbus Fire Department. This system is one of the original four advanced life support systems in the United States. The suggested devolution of the standard of care does not alter the fact that the Columbus Fire Department will have highly trained and dedicated firefighter/paramedics in their employment that will now be prohibited from practicing their skills at the highest level of their competency. This concept is counter intuitive to effective management of available resources and good governance.

Columbus has a long and distinguished history of leading the nation in the provision of state of the art EMS response. Alteration and degradation of the service level & quality to a lesser standard will jeopardize the health and well being of the community.

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