




STEVEN J. HOOK
CHIEF



CITY of WEST ALLIS
FIRE DEPARTMENT

To: Honorable Mayor Devine and Members of the Common Council
From: Chief Steven J. Hook 
Date: October 26, 2009
Re: Recommendation for Changes in Basic Life Support Fees

Recently, a committee of the Milwaukee County Association of Fire Chiefs (MCAFC) reviewed countywide ambulance fees to assure that rates are in line with current economic issues, Medicare reimbursements, and to measure consistency across the county. Besides the committee activity, I asked LifeQuest, Inc., our Basic Life Support billing agent, to determine whether we could improve revenue by changing ambulance fees.

Basic Life Support (BLS) fees are determined by the local municipality, while Advanced Life Support (ALS, "Paramedic") rates are determined by the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC, comprised of mayors and village presidents). My committee's ALS recommendations will be presented to the ICC after they are approved by the MCAFC in November.

For your review, I've attached LifeQuest's response to my inquiry and a chart from the MCAFC committee meeting that compares current BLS rates. If we implement the rate changes as suggested, LifeQuest has anticipated that the City could receive approximately \$80,000 in additional revenue based upon our transport and treatment history.

I've also attached language changes for Chapter 5 of the City's Revised Municipal Code that will be required to implement the rate changes.

I am suggesting that you approve all LifeQuest recommendations except:

1. the charge for transports should be \$14.00 per loaded mile instead of the recommended \$13.00 resident/13.50 nonresident, and
2. the "BLS On Scene Care" recommendation for residents of West Allis should be ignored.

The last ambulance fee change in our city was implemented in 2005.

I've discussed these rate changes with Gary Schmid, City Comptroller and Paul Ziehler, City Administrative Officer to assure that my recommendations are consistent with City policy and with financial accuracy as predicted by LifeQuest. Both have suggested that I pass these recommendations to your body for implementation.

While I am aware that rate increases are never entirely popular with your constituents, I also realize that user fees in the form of ambulance billing have been an acceptable method of recovering municipal costs. I will be available to address any of your concerns. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.



Billing, Collection, & Data Management Services

1-888-777-4911 • www.lifequest-services.com

N2930 State Road 22, Wautoma, WI 54982-5267

October 7, 2009

West Allis Fire Department
Steve Hook, Chief
7332 W. National Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214

Dear Chief,

As requested, enclosed you will find your BLS Only Rate Survey, our Recommended Rates for your service and the Financial Impact Summary reflecting how these changes may increase your revenue. This is a benefit LifeQuest provides to its clients at no additional charge. If, at any time in the future, your service wishes to have our team analyze your rates again, please feel free to contact our office.

Most of your BLS rates are below the average of other services in your area and therefore, we believe they can be increased. These rates have been explained in detail on the Recommended Rates page. The Financial Impact Summary shows estimates of the potential increase in your revenue. Please remember that these recommendations are based on averages for your type of service.

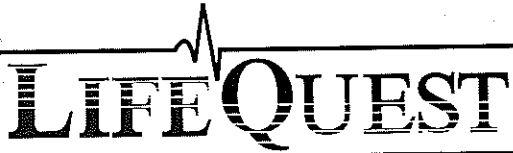
Should you decide to implement these rate increases, please sign the second page of the Recommended Rates and advise us of the Date of Service you wish the increases to go into effect. Return both pages in the enclosed return envelope, to the Attention of Nikki Phillips. If you would like to make changes other than the rates that are recommended, just write them in, and follow the procedures above.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance to you. As always, our team strives to assist you in any way possible. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me at 1-888-777-4911.

Sincerely,

Dixie Kraemer, EMT
Executive Assistant

Enclosures



West Allis Fire Department 2009 Rate Survey - BLS Rates only

Description Charge	Franklin Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	Greenfield Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	Oak Creek Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	North Shore Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	Watertown Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	West Allis Fire Department Level of Service: EMT-P	Average
BLS - Resident	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$ 575.00	\$525.00	\$425.00	\$479.17
BLS - Non Resident	\$550.00	\$500.00	\$550.00	\$ 650.00	\$625.00	\$425.00	\$550.00
Mileage - Resident	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 12.42
Mileage - Non Resident	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 14.00	\$ 11.75	\$ 7.50	\$ 12.54
Oxygen - Local	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 65.00
Spinal Immobilization					\$150.00	\$ 75.00	\$112.50
BLS On Scene Care - Res.					\$515.00	N/C	\$515.00
BLS On Scene Care - Non Res.					\$625.00	\$100.00	\$362.50

N/S/R = No Specific Rate Provided

N/C = No Charge

Milwaukee County Co # 7

City of West Allis Fire Dept Amb Svc
Steve Hook, Chief
7332 W. National Ave.
West Allis, WI 53214

**West Allis Fire Department
Recommended Rates**
See Attached Survey for Comparisons in Your Area

<u>BLS Base Rate</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
➤ Resident	\$ 425.00	\$ 500.00
➤ Non-Resident	\$ 425.00	\$ 600.00
▪ Non-Resident rates are reimbursed by virtually all-private insurance companies.		

Mileage – Charges for mileage must be based on loaded mileage only, from the pickup of a patient to arrival at the destination. The difference between the two recorded odometer readings should always be rounded up. Any portion of a mile will be billed as a complete mile.

➤ Resident	\$ 7.50	\$ 13.00
➤ Non-Resident	\$ 7.50	\$ 13.50

14.00

Procedures

Current

Recommendation

- Oxygen \$ 30.00 \$ 70.00
 - Oxygen is a reimbursable charge that is paid by virtually every insurance company.

- Spinal Immobilization \$ 75.00 \$ 100.00
 - This is payable except in the case of Medicare and Medical Assistance patients.
 - Primarily this is covered by Auto Insurance carriers with a high success rate for reimbursement.

- All other procedures should be included as part of the base rate.

BLS On Scene Care – This is charged when your service responds to a call, provides treatment, and the patient refuses transport and/or is simply not transported.

- Resident \$ 0.00 \$ 50.00

- Non Resident \$ 100.00 \$ 150.00

Reminder – By increasing your rates; with insurance companies, your service's approved reimbursable rates should increase.

- Yes, we would like to adopt the recommended rates effective _____, 2009.
- No, we would not like to adopt the recommended rates.
- Yes, we would like to adopt the rates with the changes we have indicated, effective _____, 2009.

Signature _____

Title _____

Date _____



West Allis Fire Department 2009 Financial Impact Summary

Item Increased	Approximate Billed in One Year Period*	Amount of Increase	Projected Revenue
BLS Base Rate - Resident	1011	\$75.00	\$75,789.00
BLS Base Rate - Non Resident	177	\$75.00	\$13,293.00
Mileage - Resident	2981	\$5.50	\$16,394.07
Mileage - Non Resident	537	\$6.00	\$3,223.08
Oxygen	163	\$40.00	\$6,535.20
Spinal Immobilization	70	\$25.00	\$1,743.00
BLS On Scene Care - Resident	0	\$50.00	\$0.00
BLS On Scene Care - Non Resident	71	\$50.00	\$3,528.00
Total Estimated Increase in Charges			\$120,505.35
Estimated Budget Figure Increase**			\$84,353.75

* Due to the impact of the Medicare Fee Schedule, these numbers do not include the estimated 58% of your patients that have Medicare and Medicaid type payors.

** For budget purposes, revenue should be figured at a 70% collection rate to reflect allowances for Regulated Insurance Companies and Bad Debt Adjustments (uncollectible).

Reminder: Revenue is directly proportionate to the number of billable transports and payor mix experienced by your ambulance service as well as the documentation provided by your service to LifeQuest. This number may fluctuate as much as 20% annually.

City of West Allis
Suggested Basic Life Support Billing Rates
as of October 26, 2009

<u>Community</u>	<u>BLS Base Rate Resident</u>	<u>BLS Base Rate Non-Resident</u>	<u>Mileage</u>	<u>Supplies</u>	<u>Oxygen</u>	<u>Affective</u>
Cudahy	\$450.00	\$550.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2008
Franklin	\$450.00	\$550.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2009
Greendale	\$400.00	\$500.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2010
Greenfield	\$450.00	\$500.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2008
Hales Corners	\$400.00	\$450.00	\$11.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2010
North Shore FD	\$575.00	\$650.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$60.00	\$75.00	2008
Oak Creek	\$450.00	\$550.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$50.00	\$75.00	2008
St. Francis	\$425.00	\$475.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile	\$60.00	\$60.00	2009
South Milwaukee	\$440.00	\$440.00	\$12.00 per loaded Mile	\$0.00	\$0.00	2009
Wauwatosa	\$400.00	\$500.00	\$12.00 per loaded Mile	\$40.00	\$20.00	2008
West Allis	\$425.00	\$425.00	\$7.50 per loaded Mile		\$30.00	2005
Suggested WA	\$500.00	\$600.00	\$14.00 per loaded Mile		\$70.00	Suggested
Wauwatosa bills for: EPI-Pen \$ 85 De-Fib pads \$ 85 EPI-IM included with basic supplies		West Allis bills for: On scene BLS care: \$100 non res Spinal Immobilization: \$75 Gloves: \$2 per EMT				
			Suggested for WA: On scene BLS care: \$100 res., \$200 non res Spinal Immobilization: \$75 Gloves: \$2 per EMT			
MCAFC Suggested Rates (October 16, 2008)	\$400 - \$500	\$500 - \$600	\$14 per loaded mile	\$50	\$75	2008

Suggested edits to City of West Allis Municipal Code, Chapter 5, "Fire Department Regulations":

5.03 FIRE CHIEF

(7) Ambulance Fee.¹

(a) Whenever ~~an ambulance (basic life support) ambulance~~ of the City of West Allis shall convey a person, a fee shall be charged for such service to the person, his/her insurance company, or his/her estate.

(b) The fee for the Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance service shall be ~~fivefour~~ hundred ~~twenty-five~~ dollars (~~\$500.00~~~~425.00~~) per person per conveyance for a resident of the City, and six hundred dollars (\$600.00) per person per conveyance for a nonresident. In addition, ~~transported personsnonresidents~~ shall be charged (1) ~~fourteenseven~~ dollars ~~and fifty cents~~ (~~\$14.00~~~~7.50~~) per mile for transports, (2) ~~seventy~~~~thirty~~ dollars (~~\$70.00~~~~30.00~~) for oxygen use, (3) ~~one hundredseventy-five~~ dollars (~~\$100.00~~~~75.00~~) for specialized procedures such as spinal immobilization after motor vehicle accidents, and (4) one hundred ~~fifty~~ dollars (~~\$150.00~~~~100.00~~) for on scene basic life supprt care.—~~BLS Nonresident.~~²

(c) The Fire Chief or his designee shall be responsible for obtaining the name, address, identification number and health insurance data of the person conveyed, as possible. The Manager of Finance shall be responsible for the billing and collection of the fee from the person conveyed.

¹ Ord. 6044, 10/5/1993; Ord. 6595, 11/20/2001

² Ord. 6537, 10/17/2000; Ord. O-2005-0029, 6/7/2005