Acadian, Med Express square off at LFT

Controversy over transport of infant to New Orleans

Bernard Chaillot
Staff Writer

LAFAYETTE — A New Iberia infant suffering from internal bleeding was caught in the middle Wednesday when Acadian Ambulance officials complained to police at Lafayette Regional Airport about Med Express Ambulance Service bringing the baby to catch a medical flight to New Orleans.

Med Express President Mark Majors said Thursday that Acadian’s action “is one of the most callous, irresponsible acts I have ever heard of in the ambulance industry.”

An Acadian Ambulance spokesman said Med Express is mislabeling the incident for as much public relations mileage as possible in an attempt to smear Acadian’s reputation.

The 4-month-old baby was transferred from Lafayette to Tulane Medical Center in New Orleans in a Life Flight airplane. Life Flight has a contract with Med Express, which brought the medical flight crew from the airport to Lafayette General Medical Center, then back to the airport with the baby.

Acadian officials said Thursday that the Med Express transport was a violation of the parish ambulance ordinance.

“The ordinance states that if the origin and destination of a medical transport are both in the parish, then the ambulance provider has to be licensed in the parish,” said Acadian chief operating officer David Pierce.

City police decided the destination was New Orleans, not the airport, and did not cite Med Express. The baby remained at Lafayette General while police resolved the matter.

“It wasn’t like the baby was at the airport and the plane was waiting to take off,” said Cpl. Mark Francis, public information officer for the Lafayette Police Department.

“But our reading of the ordinance is that this is an accepted practice,” he said.

“We took an offense report and will turn it over to the city attorney so the legal minds can look at it, but I don’t think anything will come of it,” he said.

Pierce said Acadian officials believe the police interpretation of the ordinance is incorrect.

Estimates of the delay caused by the complaint to Med Express were not available.

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have a level of care available from specialists at Tulane Medical Center. "Acadian's use of city police officers to try to protect their monopoly in Lafayette and placing a helpless infant at potential risk in the process is simply outrageous," he said.

Savant stopped short of saying Acadian's sheer audacity in this matter is unbelievable, he said. "Layer by layer, their veneer of respectability is peeled away to show nothing but a ruthless monopoly that will do anything to try to hold on to their market share." Savant said that charge was dropped because it could not be supported by the facts.

Majors said that charge was one in which Med Express was cited for a violation of the ordinance.

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