EMS billing worries city-parish

By JIM MCDONNELL
Associate Staff Writer

City-parish officials now expect whether the Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will continue billing the public for services rendered. They face the difficult task of finding a solution that will fairly cover the cost of the city's EMS, while ensuring fair treatment of those most in need.

City-parish officials are attempting to address whether EMS should continue billing insured patients for whatever amount their insurance will cover and billing uninsured patients for 100 percent of the agency's charges. These two positions are contrary to what the EMS director and the public expect.

Parish Attorney Lynn Williams informed board President Clifford Walker that the city's EMS program is unprofitable. He informed Walker that he would be forced to cut the EMS program down to the bone if the city was forced to continue funding the program.

In a statement from the EMS director, he said that the EMS director did not believe that EMS should continue billing insured patients for whatever amount their insurance will cover and billing uninsured patients for 100 percent of the agency's charges. These two positions are contrary to what the EMS director and the public expect.

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EMS CONTROVERSIES

He said he had been under the impression the practice began in 1988. This year, after city-parish officials were notified by the federal agency overseeing the Medicare program that EMS could receive reimbursement for Medicare patients, the city's EMS program began to bill patients.

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