

May 2, 2023

Board of Commissioners  
Morrow County  
100 S. Court Street  
Heppner, OR 97836

RE: *Morrow County Ambulance Service Area*

Board of Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the Morrow County Health District's continued assignment as the sole source provider of ambulance services for Morrow County.

I would like to provide you with some context for my interest in the provision of ambulance services in Morrow County:

1. I am currently a nationally registered and Oregon licensed Paramedic. I have been a Paramedic since 1989 and involved in EMS since 1984. I am the former Chief Investigator for EMS for the State of Oregon and have been qualified by Justice, District and Circuit Courts in the State of Oregon as a qualified expert in EMS matters.
2. I serve as the President of a critical access hospital that operates the state's largest hospital-based ambulance service, responding to more than 5,200 calls for service each year.

I would ask that the Board carefully consider the facts, and the long-term implications, of any decision related to the provision of ambulance services:

1. Morrow County Health District is the licensed ambulance provider Morrow County.
2. For more than 28 years, Morrow County Health District has faithfully provided pre-hospital care to the residents of Morrow County.
3. An Ambulance Service Area can only be assigned to a licensed ambulance service.
4. As a Critical Access Hospital that operates an ambulance service, there are certain provisions that impact the reimbursement methodology. Any change to the current Ambulance Service Area assignment may change the cost-based reimbursement for ambulance service resulting in a huge financial impact to the Health District. This may result in:
  - a. A loss of \$1M + to the District.
  - b. The inability to continue the provision of ambulance service to the rest of Morrow County.

5. Hospitals in Oregon are operating on razor-thin margins and any changes to their financial stability may jeopardize their financial viability to remain open.
6. In terms of quality pre-hospital care, hospital-based ambulance services are best positioned to ensure that the care provided is of the best quality. Hospitals have the infrastructure that they can leverage to provide education, training, clinical competency, and advanced practice skills. Ambulance services are best provided by health care professionals whose sole focus is on providing high-quality care to those they serve.

It is my firm belief that the primary role of government is to ensure the safety of the citizens that they are elected to serve. Any change to the provision of ambulance services in Morrow County would have negative consequences to the citizens of Morrow County.

I urge you to keep Morrow County Health District as your ambulance service provider for all of Morrow County.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Swanson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric Swanson, MBA, FACHE, NRP  
President  
Adventist Health Tillamook