



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

### AGENDA ITEM

**DATE:** October 9, 2001

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT:** Resuscitating the Trauma and Emergency System in San Diego County  
(District: All)

#### **SUMMARY:**

##### **Overview**

Trauma care in the state of California is at risk of going under. According to a January 2001 report titled, *California's Trauma Care: In Crisis*, there are two major infrastructure problems facing the healthcare system in this state -- California does not have a statewide trauma system and there is no dedicated funding source for this care. When one out of three people accessing our trauma care system are without insurance, there is a significant operational and economic impact that affects all health care recipients. San Diego County is not immune from this problem. Although, there are no hard and fast numbers, it has been estimated that the total dollar loss for hospitals in our trauma system ranges from \$15-\$20 million dollars per year. In fact, this was cited as one of the reasons why Scripps East County Hospital was forced to close down last year. While it is the responsibility of the State to address problems facing our trauma care system as a whole, we clearly have a crisis in our County that commands the attention of this Board. With our tobacco settlement dollars, we have an opportunity to help out in the short term until a long-term strategy is developed to deal with this situation.

##### **Recommendation(s)**

##### **SUPERVISOR ROBERTS AND SUPERVISOR COX:**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a plan, working with the Healthcare Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties and other non-profit healthcare groups, to use \$2 million per year for each of the next two fiscal years from the County's share of tobacco settlement to aid the trauma and emergency care system in San Diego County.
2. Designate \$4 million of tobacco settlement proceeds to support the trauma and emergency care system in San Diego County.
3. Direct the County's Sacramento and Washington, D.C. representatives to advocate

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for long-term funding for our trauma and emergency care system at the state and federal level and to support appropriate legislation.

**Fiscal Impact**

None with this action.

**BACKGROUND:**

The closing of Scripps East County last year was a cry for help by our health care community. Without question, our trauma care system is in crisis. With our growing uninsured problem and a lack of dedicated funding for this care, our hospitals are struggling to keep their doors open.

A report released earlier this year titled, *California's Trauma Care: In Crisis*, illustrated what is happening across the entire state. The report cited two major problems: there is no statewide trauma system and no dedicated funding earmarked with this care. While it is the responsibility of the State to address problems facing our trauma care system as a whole, we clearly have a crisis in our County that commands the attention of this Board. We cannot address statewide trauma system issues, but we may be able to do something, at least temporarily, to address the local trauma care funding crisis.

According to the report, trauma care is very costly. With all the players' involved in a crisis situation, care does not come cheap. When one out of three people accessing our trauma system are without insurance, the bill is picked up by the hospital. This is causing hospitals across the County, like Scripps East County, to re-evaluate whether they can afford to offer emergency room. Obviously, we need this type of care for our county.

What we are proposing is using \$2 million per year for the next two fiscal years from our share of tobacco settlement for temporary help for our trauma system. Obviously, this will not solve the problem indefinitely. A more permanent solution needs to be developed and funded by both our state and federal officials. However, with electricity and gas prices soaring, their attention is elsewhere. In the meantime, we cannot turn our backs on the problem of trauma care in this County.

We feel this funding is needed, available, and entirely consistent with the commitment made by our Board to spend our tobacco settlement dollars on healthcare. We urge your support for the recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

RON ROBERTS  
Supervisor, Fourth District

GREG COX  
Supervisor, First District

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**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**

**CONCURRENCE(S)**

<b>COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

**Other Concurrence(s):**

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** District 4, 1

**CONTACT PERSON(S):**

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**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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All)

**AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET**  
(continued)

**PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:**

**BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:**

**BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:**

**CONTRACT NUMBER(S):**

**SUBJECT:** Resuscitating the Trauma and Emergency System in San Diego County (District: All)

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**DEPARTMENT:**  
**PROGRAM:**  
**PROPOSAL:**

	(a)	(b)	(c)	FUTURE YEARS ESTIMATED BUDGET OF PROPOSAL IF ADOPTED	
	Budgeted Amount For Proposal	Proposed Change in Budgeted Amount	Proposed Revised Current Year Budget (a+b)	(d) 1st Subsequent Year	(e) 2nd Subsequent Year
Direct Cost					
Revenue/Other Offset					
<b>NET GENERAL FUND COST</b>					
Staff Years					

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Sources of Revenue/Other Offset for Proposed Change and Subsequent Years:

**Space-Related Impacts:** Will this proposal result in any additional space requirements?  Yes  N/A

**Support/Other Departmental Impacts:**  Yes  N/A

**Remarks:**  Yes  N/A