

CITY OF XENIA, OHIO

MEDIA RELEASE

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EMS Billing Changes Taking Effect February 1, 2020

Xenia, Ohio (January 10, 2020) - During 2019 the City of Xenia Fire Division responded to more than 6,100 calls for Fire and EMS service, of those calls, 5,008 were for emergency medical services (EMS). Those statistics make the division's front line medic crews the busiest in Greene County and the trend appears to be getting worse into 2020.

The City staffs four front line Paramedics who make up two emergency medical units. The emergency medical units are dedicated to responding to EMS calls, but with the current call volume, others in the fire division must step in to help.

In 2019 the City Manager initiated a task force to investigate the increasing call volume. The findings were surprising, and pointed to an urgent need for an ongoing multifaceted approach to address the increase in calls. "We had 10 residents who were responsible for 245 EMS calls in a year, which raises some red flags," said Xenia Fire Chief Ken Riggsby. "Xenia residents shouldn't subsidize service abusers."

In the past, the City of Xenia has operated under a 'soft billing' policy, meaning if a person who called 911 for emergency services did not pay the bill for the services, the account was not sent to collections. Eventually the City would have to write off the unpaid balance.

Starting February 1, 2020, the City of Xenia will change to a 'hard billing' policy. "The City of Xenia wrote off over \$1.8 million in 2019, which limits our ability to provide for basic safety service needs in the City," said City Manager Brent Merriman. "These billing changes make financial sense for the City and its residents while deterring abuse of our emergency medical service." Cities are required under Ohio law to provide fire services, which are funded through taxpayer dollars. The state does not require cities to provide EMS, meaning those services are not necessarily funded by taxpayer dollars and can be billed separately.

The City of Xenia has contracted with an EMS billing vendor which will maintain lists of accounts that are delinquent by 90 days or more, and will send those accounts to collection. Residents who are not able to pay the fee for emergency services have the option to fill out a "Patient Financial Hardship Form." The form needs to include proof of income and must be sent to the City's EMS billing vendor at: PO Box 2030, Mount Vernon, OH 43050-7230, within 45 days of the date of service. After the form is received, the account will be placed in 'pending' status and a review will be done.

Patients who have private insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid will only be responsible for a copay or small portion of the total bill. The City's new stance aims to be more aggressive in collections in order to discourage those who abuse the system.

The new 'hard billing' policy, which will go into effect February 1, 2020, will utilize the existing service rates with additional fees for non-transport, standby and other EMS services:

Base service fee plus loaded mileage

- Basic Life Support (BLS) - \$519.17
- Advanced Life Support 1 (ALS1) - \$830.67
- Advanced Life Support 2 (ALS2) - \$1,038.34
- Loaded mile - \$12.98/mile

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