



These are CareFlite's responses to the questions asked by letter from the Hill County Fire Fighter's Association dated August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to Hill County ESD #2.

**1. Will all departments be allowed to keep first responding in their current capacities?**

Yes, we would encourage that Fire Departments respond to any medical incidents they wish and according to their desired practices. We do understand that some departments may want to respond to everything and others may limit responses to Life Threatening emergencies and rescue situations (for example); regardless, this is a choice agencies should and do have and we will work within each departments guidelines. First Responders are an essential part of delivering care to our patients and we hope that not only the current agencies remain involved but that we can help grow First Responder participation throughout Hill County.

**2. What protocols and medical direction will we be forced to use?**

CareFlite will not force any agency to use a specific Medical Director or protocols. We will offer Medical Direction, protocols and training to agencies that want or need these services but this will certainly not be forced or mandatory. CareFlite currently operates with 13 agencies in Johnson County that have their own Medical Director and we work very well together in providing excellent care to our patients. We also provide the First Responder Organization agreement required by the Department of State Health Services to Johnson County ESD #1 which is signed by both medical directors and all departments.

**3. How will we communicate with the ambulances?**

CareFlite will install and use radios compatible with your current frequency(s) and system for direct communication with proper permission from Hill County officials.

**4. How quickly will we be notified and is that a contract requirement?**

Although a decision has not been made regarding whether First Responders will be dispatched through the Sheriff's Office or CareFlite, we will ensure that First Responders are notified immediately and according to each departments response guidelines (designed by the Department). CareFlite will have the ability to broadcast call information to multiple agencies simultaneously if we are responsible for dispatching

First Responders and if not, we will initiate a call to the Sheriff's Office to ensure First Responders have been requested and dispatched.

**5. *Will there be a dedicated ambulance at all structure fires and large incidents?***

Yes, this is customary and we are happy to make sure a unit is provided for these responses until released by the Incident Commander. Ambulance crews should also assist with safety and rehab functions when needed and not caring for a patient.

**6. *Will the departments and/or members be billed for ambulance service if injured on the job?***

We would recommend that all Fire Department personnel be provided a CareFlite Membership so that balance bills are not an issue for those that are covered under an insurance policy. We understand that many departments are not able to provide Worker's Compensation coverage to members and many are uninsured so in these cases the membership would reduce any fees for ambulance service by 50%. Federal law prohibits CareFlite from not billing for services provided however, we do have a system to help those individuals who are uninsured and unable to pay.

**7. *Will first responders be required to attend training? When and Where?***

Training and education requirements is the responsibility of your medical director and therefore those not under CareFlite's Medical Control would need to consult their current Medical Director for guidance. Those agencies under our Medical Control would be required to attend Continuing Education appropriate to First Responders at levels to maintain any certifications and verify skills proficiency. CareFlite is committed to providing monthly continuing education in Hill County (locations may rotate or change to facilitate attendance) for all who wish to attend; we have also committed to the provision of ECA courses and other training as necessary to bolster support and potentially improve First Responder participation.

**8. *Why have the first responders not been a part of the information flow?***

CareFlite cannot provide a response to this question. Compared to many other counties, we believe that ESD #2 has been unusually forthcoming and responsive to information requests from all concerned parties.

**9. *Will the new company replace supplies with exact replacements?***

CareFlite will exchange disposable supplies on a one for one basis. We cannot guarantee that supplies will be exactly what you are using now but we will make sure that all supplies are comparable and compatible to equipment currently in use across the

county. There should be consistency across departments for most of the disposable items.

**10. Who will be responsible for returning our durable supplies to us (ie backboards, splints, ect.)?**

CareFlite will pick up durable medical equipment left at facilities and return these items to the department as soon as possible. This does require a letter on file stating that we have permission to do so from the agencies involved, in the event we are inspected by the Department of State Health Services while returning equipment other than our own.

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