

CITY OF SEATTLE
ORDINANCE 127140
COUNCIL BILL 120889

AN ORDINANCE relating to provision of emergency medical services; authorizing transfer fees for basic life support transport services; and adding a new Subchapter VI to Chapter 3.16 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, the Seattle Fire Department currently provides basic life support ("BLS") emergency medical services ("EMS") and BLS emergency medical services transport ("BLS Transport") without charge; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 35.22.570, as an exercise of the power granted by RCW 35.27.370(15), the City Council has discretion to charge fees to those receiving EMS Transport from the City; and

WHEREAS, such BLS Transport user fees are often covered by medical insurance policies, including but not limited to Medicare and Medicaid; and

WHEREAS, funds derived from the voter approved King County Levy are insufficient to fully fund the City's BLS and BLS Transport costs; and

WHEREAS, as a result, BLS and BLS Transport services must be subsidized by funds from the City's General Fund; and

WHEREAS, a portion of the taxes paid by City residents contribute to the General Fund and to the provision of BLS and BLS Transport costs; and

WHEREAS, those benefiting from the City's BLS Transport should be charged a fee to reimburse the City for at least some portion of the cost of the BLS Transport;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. A new Subchapter VI, which includes new Sections 3.16.400, 3.16.410, 3.16.420, and 3.16.430, is added to Chapter 3.16 of the Seattle Municipal Code as follows:

Subchapter VI Basic Life Support Transport Services

3.16.400 Definitions

As used in this Subchapter VI:

“BLS” means basic life support.

“BLS transport” means transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, including BLS ambulance services as defined by chapter 18.73 RCW, as amended.

“Insurance” or “insurer” include, at a minimum, Medicare and Medicaid.

“Resident” means a person whose principal place of residence is in Seattle.

3.16.410 BLS transport user fee imposed

A. All persons receiving BLS transport by the City shall be charged and billed a BLS transport user fee. The fee is \$950 per transport plus \$15 per mile. The Fire Chief or designee is authorized to establish procedures to implement, bill, and collect the fee.

B. A resident who supplies the City with the medical insurance information and documentation needed to bill the resident’s insurance provider for the fee, and who assigns insurance benefits for the same to the City, shall not be billed for any portion of the fee above amounts paid by the resident’s insurer(s). A nonresident taking the same steps shall be billed for any portion of the fee above amounts paid the nonresident’s insurer(s). Any person who does not take these steps shall be billed for the entire fee.

3.16.420 Construction with Medicare and Medicaid requirements

Charges for the BLS transport authorized by this Subchapter VI shall be construed and implemented in a manner consistent with Medicare and Medicaid requirements as applicable. If any method or procedures authorized by this Subchapter VI for the purpose of establishing, implementing, imposing, or collecting charges for BLS transport is found to conflict with Medicare and or Medicaid requirements, those Medicare and/or Medicaid requirements control.

3.16.430 Policy and financial assistance

A. It is the City's policy that ability to pay is not a condition of BLS transport service. All aspects of emergency medical services the City currently provides, including BLS transport, shall be provided to all patients without discrimination toward those with no or inadequate ability to pay.

B. The Fire Chief or designee shall establish a program consistent with criteria and rules set forth in WAC 246-453-001 through 246-453-060, as amended, to provide financial assistance and debt forgiveness to persons that do not have the ability to pay for some or all of the fee.

Section 2. The provisions of this ordinance are declared to be separate and severable. The invalidity of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section, subsection, or portion of this ordinance, or the invalidity of the application thereof to any person, property, or circumstance, shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this ordinance or the validity of its application to other persons, property, or circumstances.

Section 3. This ordinance shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

Passed by the City Council the 21st day of November, 2024,
and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 21st day of
November, 2024.



President _____ of the City Council

☒ Approved / ☐ returned unsigned / ☐ vetoed this 26th day of November, 2024.



Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Filed by me this 27th day of November, 2024.



Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

(Seal)