

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

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DATE: September 17, 2014

TO: Commission on EMS

FROM: Dr. Howard Backer, Director

PREPARED BY: Lisa Schoenthal, Division Chief
Disaster Medical Services Division

SUBJECT: Impact of Budget Reductions on Disaster Medical Preparedness

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive information regarding the budget reductions in the Disaster Medical Services Division.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

DISCUSSION:

Both federal and state funds have incrementally decreased over the past years culminating in a substantial reduction in the budget for the Disaster Medical Services (DMS) Division. With the recent 13.65% cut in federal Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) grant funds for the 2014/2015 grant year, the DMS budget is now 40% of what it was at the height of Public Health and Medical Preparedness in 2008. Consequently, DMS has a total of five fewer staffed positions since 2008 and general disaster medical preparedness has been affected including the decreased capacity and capability of the Mobile Medical Assets Program.

The DMS Division has taken steps to mitigate gaps in preparedness by strategically recruiting and retaining state employees that form a blended team of prolific emergency managers and healthcare practitioners with the multidisciplinary skill set to effectively fulfill the State's role in disaster medical preparedness and response. Forty percent of the state personnel in DMS were recruited from outside of state government.

EMSA is discussing identified gaps in preparedness and options to address these gaps with the California Health and Human Services Agency and the California Department of Public Health.