

Too Costly

4/28/82 Seaford

# County Shelves Paramedic Program

A countywide paramedics program that has been discussed for six years was sent back to the drawing board by county supervisors Tuesday.

Supervisors made it clear that a full paramedic program is beyond the pocketbook of the county and the patients who would ultimately pay the costs.

"I have been dubious and remain dubious that our county can afford a paramedics program," Supervisor Gary Patton commented, but ultimately supported a financial review of the programs.

At the urging of Dr. Richard Schwab, the board agreed that a lesser-trained medic program should be investigated. The "EMT-2" program offered by Schwab would have medically-trained personnel at fire

stations who would treat patients if ambulances were delayed.

Their treatment, however, would employ no drugs, nor sophisticated medical tools beyond intravenous feeding for shock and defibrillation — heart stimulation.

The doctor said his EMT-2s would shave the average emergency patient cost from \$295 to \$270, with part of that savings being the \$1 less an hour that EMT-2s are paid compared to paramedics.

Even at that, the board was hesitant to buy in.

However, Supervisor Wayne Moore said he believed something should be done as soon as possible, noting the attempts to get a countywide paramedic program had been going on for years.

In his report to the board, Acting County Administrator George Newell noted the ambulance services have "an effective countywide organization" which could lead to a countywide paramedic services.

He said that costs are a major concern and that present response times are not unreasonable. And, the system can be improved with more civilians trained in life-saving methods.

"The fire agencies offer a poor vehicle for offering a specialized service on a countywide basis (and) while the Aptos Fire Protection District has demonstrated that a fire service can successfully provide paramedic services, the Aptos model does not fit on a countywide basis."