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Paramedic plan okayed

An experimental paramedic program for the Aptos fire department was approved yesterday by the Santa Cruz County board of supervisors.

The action clears the legal roadblocks from the program which will operate for a year inside the Aptos fire district beginning Dec. 1.

The department now has three Stanford University trained paramedics working as firemen, and is converting a large ambulance-like van into a paramedic rescue truck. The program will begin to operate once acting county health officer Dr. Joseph Craig certifies the paramedics to operate in Santa Cruz County, the county signs a no-cost contract with Dominican Hospital for it to function as a base hospital under provisions of Wedforth-Townsend Act, and special radio telemetry equipment is received by the hospital and fire department.

Paramedics, acting under a doctor's orders received by radio or telephone, will be able to administer life-saving drugs and use medical equipment that firemen and ambulance attendants are now normally banned from using in the field.