

Pilot Paramedic Program Unveiled

A pilot paramedic program in the Aptos Fire District may soon be giving critically ill or injured persons the advanced life support and emergency medical aid necessary to improve their survival chances.

Developed by the Aptos Fire Department and Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital, the program is expected to be started on a trial basis within a month under authorization by county supervisors.

Hospital, fire department and county personnel and facilities will be put behind the program, which is predicated upon the assumption that the high morbidity and mortality rate seen during the pre-hospital phase of an injury or illness can be substantially reduced by the quick provision of skilled, professionally directed aid out in the field.

The system was demonstrated Thursday at Dominican, which will staff the base station & the hospital on an around-the-clock basis.

The provision of aid begins with the dispatch of the Aptos Paramedic Unit to the emergency scene. This unit will be staffed with one paramedic and one emergency medical technician (EMT). The unit will have additional backup manpower provided by the two firemen on the responding engine company.

The paramedic unit will be linked to the Dominican base station by radio to report on conditions encountered and to get advice from qualified doctors and nurses at the base station monitor.

The monitor is even equipped with a receiving screen on which may be displayed an electrocardiogram sent from the paramedic unit either by radio or over a telephone line.

Information on the heart and other vital signs taken by the paramedic team (pulse, temperature, blood pressure) will be interpreted by doctors involved in the program under direction of Dr. Richard Drucker, who is medical leader of the paramedic program.

From the Dominican base station emergency physicians and certified mobile intensive care nurses will direct the pre-hospital care of patients needing life support and emergency treatment.

At Thursday's demonstration at Dominican, fire department paramedics Phil Scofield and Greg Joseph demonstrated use of a Lifepak system to get vital needed data on the condition of the heart of a person assumed to have had a heart attack.

Under the program, an ill or injured person will have his choice of the hospital to be taken to: Community Hospital of Santa Cruz, Community Hospital of Watsonville or Dominican. When possible, the choice will be honored, but in the event of a life-threatening problem the victim will be taken to the nearest emergency room for treatment.

Throughout its work, the duty of the paramedic unit will be to evaluate a patient's condition and, following the direction of the base station doctors or mobile intensive care nurse, treat the life-threatening emergencies, attempt to stabilize the patient's condition and then arrange for transportation via

private ambulance to a hospital for definitive care.

The entire program is under authority of the county health officer, Dr. Joseph Craig, who is empowered by the state to certify and evaluate the paramedics and mobile intensive care nurses.

The program will cover the Aptos Fire District, with the unit dispatched by the county communications center, with the starting date depending upon ratification of the pilot paramedic contract between the fire department, Dominican Hospital and the county.

All preparation and implementation costs of the program have been paid by the fire district and Dominican, the press was told Thursday during the demonstration.

Program development and implementation involved Dr. Drucker, Gaye Cornell, R.N., MICN, head nurse of the Dominican emergency department and paramedic liaison; Tom Hart, Dominican administrative assistant; Richard Chinn, chief of the Aptos Fire Department, and paramedics Terry Gritton, Scofield and Joseph.



ABOVE — Paramedics Phil Scofield and Greg Joseph (ministering aid) demonstrate use of special equipment to be used by the Aptos Fire Department paramedic unit to give life-saving aid to the ill or injured.



LEFT — Nurse Janet Slay demonstrates use of monitor in emergency base station at Dominican Santa Cruz Hospital to direct provision of life-saving aid to an Aptos Fire Department paramedic team.

SLV Water Salary Hike OK'd

San Lorenzo Valley County Water District employees were granted salary increases retroactive to January 1 in a 3-0 vote of the Board of Directors Wednesday, Director R.W. Johnson reported.

Johnson abstained from the vote and Director Edwin Peterson was absent.

District Manager Hank Cardona, set to resign his post April 1, received a 35 percent increase from \$1,700 a month to \$2,300. This means an \$1,800 increase in his paycheck for the three months he is employed by the district in 1978.

This is the first increase Cardona has received in his year and a half with the district.

trict.

Secretary Bernice Vorrath received a 15 percent raise and all other employees received a 2.6 percent increase. Vorrath said her salary increase was higher because she did not receive a raise in 1976-77, while all other employees did.

The 2.6 percent increase came as a result of a salary survey recently completed where district employees' salaries were compared with wages of employees at comparable agencies.

In other board action, the directors unanimously agreed to remove any restrictions on the initial filling or refilling of public or private swimming

pools, Johnson reported.

The board amended the ordinance passed during the drought which forbade the initial filling or refilling of swimming pools with district water.

Directors agreed, however, to review the swimming pool situation prior to June 1 when it can be better predicted what the water availability will be this summer.

The water situation may be looking up with the district receiving conformation from the state late Wednesday that it has until May 30 to complete the federally-funded Olympia

well project.

The projected, funded by a \$300,000 Economic Development Agency loan, is expected to bring in 250 gallons per minute of water from a refurbished well on the old Olympia quarry property.

The district originally had until March 1 to complete the project or lose the federal funding. With this deadline an impossibility for the district to meet, the district was saved when Gov. Edmund Brown Jr. recently signed a bill extending the deadline for certain EDA projects.

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