

[Proposal]

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” — George Bernard Shaw

Thank you, George, I will take it from here. There is a silent enemy, a handicap in our goals as a department. The overall lack of physical education and activity in the EMS department presents a risk to the hospital's bottom dollar and the well-being of each personnel member. This ever growing problem assaults on three fronts:

1. The hospital's payout for covering a sick or injured person
2. The risk of musculoskeletal injuries incurred on the person
3. The blatant lack of support in the department for morale and mental health.

There is an opportunity present. Information is liberating, and contained herein is a compilation of substantiated data on the benefits we are missing out on for personnel and the hospital as a whole. The upfront cost for this opportunity is \$12,940.55. This cost covers a well-rounded, functioning gym for static and dynamic conditioning. The cost of each item has been priced between three competitive companies to find the best item at an efficient cost.

DITCH DOCTORS and TACTICAL ATHLETES

EMS is possibly the most unique direct patient-care department this hospital has. There are many similarities between EMS and Nursing in assessments, continuity of care, but the similarities stop when considering the work environment. Prehospital medicine in Martin County offers cutting-edge, advanced treatments coupled with top-notch patient assessments while managing all West Texas weather from the brownouts to the downpouring rain. These are coupled with all manner of settings. We go where the people are from the narrow, cluttered trailer to the 5 foot deep, muddy bar ditch; hence the term “ditch doctors”. In the 48 hour shift of any one personnel, you may find yourself initiating patient care upside down in the wrecked car. Extricating that person involves having to extricate yourself. Of course, you cannot forget the oilfield around here. Drill baby, drill as they are now saying in the media. I only extend personal anecdotes when it best carries my purpose across these pages—

Picture it: [location], 2019. You are treating a trauma patient who was struck by a 3 ½ inch drill pipe across his scapula while atop the Derrick's drilling platform. For those who are unaware, that means you are in an involuntary oil-scapades as you slide from one end to the next. Once the 200+ lb patient is packaged in both KED and stairchair, you begin the trek down a narrow, high-angle stairway to reach the ground. There is a group above and below you assisting in not letting you fall, but only you and one other set of hands have actual contact in holding that person's weight. There is no chance to rest. There is no chance to stop until you are at the bottom.

In all these scenarios, EMS may be called to expend a level of cardiovascular effort higher than most other medical professionals at [hospital]. All while doing so under less-than-ideal situations that may prove life threatening. This well defines the term, "Tactical Athlete". This subset of the populace are known to require more robust cardiovascular margins to ensure their own safety and provide for the population placing their trust, and their tax dollars, into them. If this were not enough to take in, the Dept. of Labor and Statistics stated that "The injury rates for EMS workers are higher than rates reported by [Department of Labor] for any industry in 2000...".¹ Of these injuries, the report goes on to mention the most common being sprains, strains, and tears. The work schedule EMS carries out can throw a wrench into any plans one has off-duty, and physical fitness is not free from this crime. Resistance training, when done consistently, may enhance cardiovascular health by reducing the resting blood pressure of the individual. Progressive overload, a fancy term for adding more weight over a reasonable time, also shows evidence of increasing bone density and reducing arthritic pains.² Having access to a weight room with a complete approach to physical fitness, while on shift, will reduce the interruptions in the reaching for better bodies and minds.

IT'S ALL IN YOUR HEAD

Why did I mention the mind? The mental health of Paramedics and EMTs can no longer be adequately supported with pizza parties and donuts. The emotions are the physical interpretations of the outside world that are then defined and quantified by the mind. Emotions create thoughts which then create action. What we feel can become the reality we live in. The work stressors in EMS are non-linear. You cannot clock in and know exactly what you will face on that 48 hour tour. You may be sitting in a meeting at 10a and then holding the weight of a dead child at 10:30a. A few hours later, you are left staring at the now cold cup of untouched coffee wondering what to do with these newfound experiences. In the need for simplicity, we can factor the most common side effects of accumulating mental fatigue and emotionally traumatizing scenes to depression, anxiety, and burnout. How can adding a stressor of exercise combat these other stressors? "Even though exercise itself might act as a stressor it has been demonstrated that it reduces the harmful effects of other stressors when performed at moderate intensities."³ Many who have engaged in long-term fitness goals and lifestyles can attest that it improves their ability to bear the mental/emotional load of life's adversities. After all, what forms in the mind begins in the body. Ever realized you were anxious and then noticed your heart is already racing out of your chest? Were we to have access to suitable fitness equipment, it

¹ (Maguire, B. J., Hunting, K. L., Guidotti, T. L., & Smith, G. S. (2005). Occupational Injuries among Emergency Medical Services Personnel. *Prehospital Emergency Care* (italics previous). 9(4), 405-411. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10903120500255065>)

² Westcott, Wayne L. "Resistance training is medicine: effects of strength training on health." *Current sports medicine reports* vol. 11,4 (2012): 209-16. doi:10.1249/JSR.0b013e31825dabb8

³ (Deslandes A, Moraes H, Ferreira C, Veiga H, Silveira H, Mouta R, Pompeu FA, Coutinho ES, Laks J. Exercise and mental health: many reasons to move. *Neuropsychobiology*. 2009;59940:191-8. doi: 10.1159/000223730. Epub 2009 Jun 10. PMID: 192521110)

would break the routine and offer a productive measure to gain a healthy outlook on the day. There would also be a source for morale boosting from team building potential.

THERE IS NO “I” IN TEAM

Offering help to the individual can further strengthen the capacity of the team. Your partner is with you for two consecutive days, whatever may come, and the partnership requires an ability to navigate each other’s personalities. There would be many opportunities for constructive team building in a workout program. This program does not necessarily need to apply to the entire collective. There should be room to allow personalization of individual skill-level, fitness ability, and the desired pathways of each two-person team on-duty.

This department has made strides to come together following a burden brought by the pandemic. The integrity of these efforts is tested in the merit of our willingness to support one another. The premise of forward movement is education and what is done with that knowledge is what is remembered. This expense and plan opens the way for people to have better access to personal health and prosperity.

Itemized list of equipment with associated cost:

Rep Fitness Ares 4000 80"x 30" power rack	\$4,155.85
Rep Fitness Ergo HEx dumbbell set 5 lb-100 lb	\$3,599.99
Rep Fitness AB-3000 2.0 FID Adjustable weight bench	\$329.99
Rep Fitness Black Bumper plates (260 lb set)	\$554.99
Rep Fitness Delta Basic Bar	\$179.99
Rep Fitness Sandbag Med	\$59.99
Rep Fitness Sandbag Lg	\$69.99
Tractor Supply rubber flooring	\$909.79
Rogue Fitness Black Concept 2 RowErg Rower-PM5	\$990.00
Academy ProForm Pro 9000 Treadmill	\$1,799.99
Rep Fitness D handles and Tricep rope	\$39.99
Rep Fitness Pro Series Package	\$249.99

TOTAL: \$12,940.55