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La Crosse Plans to Start Ambulance Service

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The ambulance business in La Crosse could soon be in for a major shake-up. City and county officials have plans to introduce legislation creating a city-run ambulance service.

This comes as surprising news to Tri-State Ambulance. When the City of La Crosse first started discussing a city-wide ambulance service, Tri-State was informed they'd have a role in the discussion. However, Tri-State says they haven't met with city officials in six months, and are wondering why they didn't have a part in the process. Officials say their main concern is they've never been told what is wrong with their current service and that competing services would be bad for patients.

"Tri-State Ambulance provides clinically proficient, operationally efficient, financially stable regional ambulance service. The key to that is it's regional. (Fragmenting the service) would disrupt the clinical operational delivery," says Tri-State Director Matt Zavadsky.

Zavadsky also adds that since Tri-State is a privately owned business, patients are only billed when they use the service. Their financial information, as well as other information can be found on their [web site](#).

He says if the service was run by the city, taxpayers would likely have to support it. One of the supporters of a city run service, La Crosse County Board Chair Steve Doyle says "Nobody is envisioning the city taking over ambulance services and forcing out Tri-State. We're looking at a mechanism for integration."

Doyle adds that top city and county officials will be meeting privately on Friday to decide what to publicly say about the ambulance situation.

La Crosse Mayor Mark Johnsrud says he wants to hold a joint press conference with the city and the county, although no date has been set. They are looking at creating what he calls, "an enhanced EMT service."

Tri-State Ambulance is an affiliate of Gundersen Lutheran, but serves both Gundersen and Franciscan Skemp. Officials at Franciscan Skemp say they're monitoring the situation to make sure the best thing happens for their patients.



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