We hope this information about Albuquerque Ambulance Service (AAS) in 2017 will help in understanding the essential role we play in the health of our community. AAS is a not-for-profit emergency and non-emergency ambulance service that has served central New Mexico for 45 years. We are committed to serving the healthcare needs of our community well into the future.

Our Team

AAS employs more than 400 skilled practitioners: emergency medical technicians (EMTs), EMT-intermediates, paramedics, community paramedics, critical care paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, logistics technicians and truck mechanics.

• We hired and trained more than 100 employees in 2017.

• We conducted an original EMT-I class for 12 AAS employees in the summer of 2017, greatly enhancing career mobility for our staff and our ability to increase the number of our Intermediate Life Support ambulances in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system.

• AAS sponsored 12 employees’ participation in area paramedic training programs.

• Our community paramedics developed a 100-hour community paramedic curriculum and completed it by the end of 2017.

• We conducted a Flight Paramedic Course for AAS paramedics interested in working on the Critical Care Transport (CCT) team and successfully graduated six students.

Our Equipment

• AAS has increased its vehicle replacement program to 10 ambulances per year from eight per year and in five years has increased the size of its fleet from 56 to 66 ambulances.

• We have purchased and installed 17 Stryker PowerLoad gurney lift systems, which greatly reduce the risk of injury to our staff and patients from lifting gurneys into ambulances. It will take another four to five years to completely outfit all our ambulances with PowerLoad gurneys.

• With the assistance of the Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation, we purchased three LUCAS™ chest compression systems for use during CPR. These are mechanical devices that produce the best outcomes for patients by more effectively providing chest compressions in moving ambulances. The Foundation also helped us acquire a Baby Pod device that enables our CCT team to transport critical neonatal patients to a higher level of care.

• We have constructed a back-up communication center as a precaution against catastrophic failure at our primary dispatch center.
Our Services

- We responded to 130,453 requests for service in 2017, a one percent increase from 2016, including:
  - 91,860 9-1-1 responses with the Albuquerque Fire Department
  - 16,249 9-1-1 responses with the Bernalillo County Fire Department
  - 560 9-1-1 responses with the Corrales Fire Department
  - 380 9-1-1 responses with the Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) Fire Department including the Veterans Administration campus
  - 21,404 inter-facility transfers

- AAS performed 94,509 transports in 2017, including:
  - 74,056 9-1-1 transports
    - 64,870 in Albuquerque
    - 8,600 in Bernalillo County
    - 374 in Corrales
    - 212 on KAFB
  - 20,453 inter-facility transports
    - 1,954 critical care transports

- Our Community Paramedic team conducted 3,184 home visits and had 221 Connections Social Service referrals that helped reduce high-utilizers’ emergency department visits by nearly 60 percent.

Our Clinical Accomplishments

- 87 percent of the time, we transported heart attack victims to a cardiac catheterization lab in fewer than 90 minutes, which exceeds the American Heart Association’s national goal of 75 percent.

- 32 percent of the time, we restored cardiac arrest victims’ pulses by the time we arrived at an emergency department.

- AAS, along with our fire department partners, earned the American Heart Association Silver Award for excellence in out-of-hospital heart attack care.

- We have eight expanded special skills for our critical care paramedics, allowing AAS to provide the highest level of critical care to intensive-care patients who need to be transported to hospitals.

- We changed our deployment model for our Critical Care Transport team to be in two “fly cars.” Fly cars are paramedic teams who respond to emergencies alongside an ambulance in a separate vehicle. The ambulance will transport the patient, allowing paramedics in the fly cars to respond to additional emergencies. This enables us to cover more critical-care-level calls.

- Our intermediate life support crews have started to respond to selected 9-1-1 calls, as well as inter-facility transport requests, to allow our paramedic-level crews to be available for more critical 9-1-1 calls.

Our Community

- Our education team spent more than 24,000 hours providing education for EMS practitioners throughout central New Mexico.

- AAS provides innovative apprenticeships for paramedic students while they are in school in collaboration with The University of New Mexico and Central New Mexico Community College, as well as management internships

- AAS spent 100 hours at community events teaching CPR and providing career information about the exciting field of EMS.

- The joint AAS/AFD Public Inebriate Intervention Program transported 726 people to the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Assessment and Treatment (MATS) facility. Another 145 individuals had an ambulance summoned because they needed to be seen in an emergency department.
Dear fellow citizens, colleagues, and friends:

Every year when we look back at our work, we see how Albuquerque Ambulance Service continues to evolve, improve and adapt to our changing healthcare and emergency medical services (EMS) environment.

We took on two major projects this year. First was the restructuring of our Critical Care Transport (CCT) team deployment. Prior to this change, we had an ambulance with two paramedics and an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) available 24/7. Now, we deploy the critical care paramedics in two fly cars. The fly cars are deployed separately to assist the ambulance with critical care transports. This has essentially doubled our resource availability. All our paramedics went through additional training so they would complement the services our CCT team provides. The program has been an overwhelming success.

The second major project has been the evolution of the Intermediate Life Support (ILS) program. These units, typically staffed with intermediate EMTs who have specialized cardiac monitoring skills, now do many of the inter-facility transports in our system. We have also worked in collaboration with our fire department partners to introduce ILS ambulances into the 9-1-1 response configuration for certain low-acuity EMS calls. This program also has been a great success.

In order to support the ILS program, AAS conducted an original EMT-I certification course in collaboration with The University of New Mexico EMS Academy. Our first class was a smashing success, with our National Registry Exam first-time pass rate being well above the average. Our EMTs took this compressed class, followed immediately by our ILS cardiac monitoring special skill training, and helped us expand our ILS ambulance program. AAS will be conducting its second original EMT-I certification class in the summer of 2018.

In 2017, there were changes in the leadership of the Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Fire Departments. We treasure our excellent working relationships with other first-response agencies and believe we are off to a great start with these new leadership teams.

Our EMS system continues to face tremendous challenges, particularly as it relates to citizens who access the 9-1-1 system for issues that often do not require the services of an emergency department. AAS addresses some of this with our Community Paramedic Program, but more needs to be done. We plan to launch a pilot project in the latter part of 2018 for people who have accessed 9-1-1, and who have lower-acuity medical needs, to be redirected to appointments in the community’s urgent care facilities. These appointments will be scheduled only after a video visit with an emergency physician, and if the healthcare provider determines it is safe and appropriate for the patient to be treated at an urgent care facility. We believe this approach to medical care will help us deliver the right care, to the right person, at the right place, with the right service level, at the right time. This will serve to reduce emergency department overcrowding, free up EMS service availability, reduce costs and give patients a more satisfactory experience.

Finally, it is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement from AAS in August 2018. Following the recent death of my wife, Maureen, my only child and his wife invited me (insisted that I relocate) to be near them and my soon-to-be-born first grandchild in Barcelona, Spain. So, after a very competitive recruitment process, we have selected Scott Kasper as the new Chief of Albuquerque Ambulance Service. Chief Kasper comes to AAS with 30 years of experience in EMS and 25 years in senior leadership in Massachusetts and New Jersey. I am confident that Chief Kasper will lead AAS to continued excellent service for years to come. Chief Kasper will take on his responsibilities in June 2018, providing an opportunity for a very planned and smooth transition before I retire.

Albuquerque Ambulance Service has been the best organization I have ever worked for. The people are talented, caring and committed to service. It has been an honor to be their Chief, and I wish only the best for AAS and its employees in the years to come.

Kurt Krumperman, PhD, NRP
Chief, Albuquerque Ambulance Service