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Oakland prods lawmakers on ambulance standards

By MARY LOU CALLAWAY

Oakland county's top medical official has called on area residents to urge their state representatives to speed passage of pending legislation to improve ambulance services in Michigan.

Floor debate is expected to begin next week in the house of representatives on two bills which would establish operating standards and licensing for ambulance firms. Similar bills were enacted in the senate last spring.

"It is important that representatives hear from individual citizens," said Gary T. Casfield, director of the county's medical services division. "They won't do anything unless they hear from those with no vested interest."

"THE BILLS GO a long way toward improvements. The executive council endorses them. Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy endorses them, and I'm sure the board of commissioners are in favor of them."

The only opposition I've heard of is that some of the ambulance companies in northern Michigan which use volunteers may not support the bills."

If enacted, the bills would also divide the state into regions to coordinate and integrate services, reduce overlapping costs and require hospitals to provide information on available emergency equipment and services.

The bills were sent to the House in

March. A house version was voted out of the appropriations committee in June. Action on the bills stalled in July, just before the legislature adjourned for the summer, when a house-senate conference committee eliminated a \$114,000 implementation allocation.

* No house sponsor has been appointed.

SEN. JOHN R. OTTERBACHER (D-Grand Rapids), chairman of the senate health, social services and retirement committee and sponsor of the senate version, said that the bills would establish an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) system in Michigan which would save lives and money.

He called the present system "ineffective and inefficient as it is now based on outdated statutes and a lack of coordinated services."

National studies, Otterbacher said, show that 30 per cent of those dying from accidents and 10 per cent of those dying from heart attacks could be saved if established EMS techniques were applied. Otterbacher said 3,000 Michigan lives could be saved annually.

Proper EMS services could also greatly reduce the number of permanent disabilities due to inadequately trained ambulance personnel and poorly equipped vehicles, Otterbacher said.

Retirement planning courses in area

"Planning for the Senior Years," Wayne State University's newest program for persons about to retire, will be offered in two suburban locations and in downtown Detroit.

Offered by the Applied Management and Technology Center, the program consists of six lectures of two hours each on Saturdays. Course starting dates are:

- *Sept. 18 at 10 a.m. in the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education (the former Barnum Junior High), 746 Purdy.
- *Sept. 18 at 2 p.m. at AMTC headquarters, 2978 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit.
- *Oct. 30 at 10 a.m. at Plymouth Salem High School, Joy west of Canton Center roads.

Coordinator is Howard F. Shout, a Birmingham resident who is retired from Detroit Edison Co.



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Shout said guest experts will cover such topics as finances, health, leisure activities, where to live, travel, food and fitness, and second careers.

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