



February 24, 2021

Brandon Ward
Director
Office of Emergency Medical Service
Tennessee Department of Health

Director Ward,

On behalf of the Tennessee EMS Communications Committee, I would like to offer our support and recommendation to the State of Tennessee to move forward with the proposed expansion of the Tennessee Advanced Communications Network (TACN) through the proposal presented by Motorola Solutions that would include EMS, healthcare facilities and public health.

Emergency Medical Services, hospitals, medical first responders and all disciplines within Public Safety have a long history of cooperative and collaborative response to disasters in Tennessee. Locally, regionally and statewide, the call for help from our neighbors in the response community never goes unanswered. The common and greatest challenges often faced in these responses have been related to communications. This has never been more evident than what we faced in 2020 with tornados, mass casualty motor vehicle crashes and demonstrations of civil unrest across the state, all against the backdrop of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted every facet of our response within Tennessee. With hospital bed availability at an all-time critical shortage and EMS services tasked with more complex call volumes, effective communications have been a challenge for many services and providers. EMS requests to support neighboring cities and counties have become necessary due to increased call volumes and longer transports and delays due to COVID decontamination, while common communications platforms are not readily available.

The TACN network has been instrumental in providing Tennessee with a clear advantage in Interoperable Communications where it is currently utilized. The EMS Communications Committee believes this system would provide the necessary capabilities for Emergency Medical Services and Healthcare to advance our communications capabilities well beyond the financial and technological capabilities of any single jurisdiction. This system would further support our goal for EMS in Tennessee to have a common, mission-critical communications platform to meet the current and future needs of EMS services in both high population metropolitan areas as well as the most financially distressed rural areas of the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike McKeever".

Mike McKeever
Chair, Tennessee EMS Communications Committee

Emergency Communications Manager
Erlanger Health System / LIFE FORCE Air Medical Service