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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Marion County Public Health Department on Behalf of Marion County EMS Association

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The Marion County Emergency Medical Services Association met to discuss and plan for the potential to implement Senate File 615, allowing Boards of Supervisors to ask the citizens of the county to vote to determine if EMS should be designated as an essential service in Marion County. The designation of essential services requires the creation of a unified organizational structure for EMS in the county, standardized protocols from which to work, and coordination among medical directors for the services. The planning for an essential service will include a needs assessment, developing and implementing the EMS Standards, and coordinated plan for serving the entire county with standardized EMS services. The designation as an essential service also allows Boards of Supervisors to levy to support the EMS Services. This will require a strong business plan to be developed by the coalition of services and their helping agencies.

Teri VanKooten, the EMS program manager at Marion County Public Health, stated “The goal of the EMS Association is to develop a system that supports all of the EMS Services in the county, so we can assure that no matter where in the county an emergency occurs, we have the volunteer and professional personnel to save lives”. Cory Bakalar supported that notion, saying “our EMS services that serves our small communities is important in saving time to get to patients in the rural parts of the county. Time saved equals lives saved.” Jeff Anderson added “The role of the EMA office is to build capacity to respond to emergencies of every scale. The work done by the EMS Association to achieve this goal supports the EMS system and every service in it”.

The association members meet monthly to work on these plans, coordinate trainings, and discuss new protocols and technologies that can be helpful in their life saving work.