

MYTH

FACT

REMSA is a monopoly.



REMSA is not a monopoly. It is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization that is regionalized by the three local governments and authorized to ensure that there is one regulated sole provider of EMS for Washoe County's citizens - all of which is approved by Nevada law. Just like there is one law enforcement department and one fire service for each city, REMSA was established as the EMS provider for Washoe County. As part of being that sole provider, it has oversight from and reports to the District Board of Health (DBOH) monthly, on metrics such as response times, quality of care, patient satisfaction and average bill rates.

Contracts should always be put out to bid for government services.



Nevada law recognizes that competitive bidding puts EMS systems - and patients - at risk. Therefore, the state exempts EMS from bidding requirements. Bidding is seen as inappropriate for emergency medical services because it can fragment medical oversight, weaken response time reliability, incentivize cost-cutting over patient care, and disrupt lifesaving services during transitions. Nevada law allows these exemptions when competition would undermine public safety which is exactly why EMS systems are designed to be integrated, regulated and stable not fragmented or market driven.

REMSA's contract isn't regulated like other utilities.



Across the country, local governments partner with private organizations to deliver essential services like electricity. In Washoe County, emergency medical services are provided through a franchise model. This is not simply a "contract," as it is sometimes mistakenly described. A franchise establishes clear responsibility, accountability, and service expectations for the entire community. Investor owned- utilities are regulated by the Nevada Public Utilities Commission. But nonprofits and authorities, like REMSA, are governed locally. REMSA is overseen by the District Board of Health, whose members are either elected by the people of Washoe County, Reno, and Sparks or appointed by local governing bodies. This structure ensures local oversight, transparency, and accountability for the care our community depends on and is what guarantees Washoe County is getting the best deal.

MYTH

REMSA is getting a better deal because it doesn't have to pay a franchise fee and they can charge what they want.



REMSA made \$71 million two years ago. How can they be a nonprofit and make all of that money. Where did it all go?



There is no transparency or oversight of REMSA and they get away with all kinds of stuff.



FACT

Everything about this statement is wrong.

REMSA does not get to charge “what they want.” REMSA’s ground ambulance average bill rate is set and regulated by the DBOH. REMSA doesn’t pay a franchise fee because it provides \$1.4 million in uncompensated care when it treats and transports patients who have no insurance or cannot pay. It also provides \$7.1 million in treatment-without-transport because REMSA doesn’t bill for a responding to call - only for transporting a patient to the hospital. The people in Washoe County are the ones getting a better deal with REMSA as their ambulance service. REMSA is FREE for them. Unless they are transported, citizens don’t pay anything for REMSA’s dispatchers, EMTs and paramedics to be ready to provide emergency care. However, citizens do pay taxes already for fire suppression/response, police, parks, and courts- whether they use those things or not.

In 2023 and 2024, REMSA Health generated \$62 million and \$78 million in revenue, respectively. Every penny of every dollar that REMSA Health takes in through user fees, class registrations, donations, grants and contracts, is spent on employees and community members through wages and benefits, life-saving equipment that is required to run an EMS system, outreach programs like Safety Seats and services - like answering medical 9-1-1 calls and deploying ambulances across Washoe County.

REMSA is the region’s only 9-1-1 provider held to response time standards, required to maintain accreditations and have third party performance oversight. In addition to oversight from its volunteer, community appointed board of directors, there are multiple levels of independent oversight including the EMS Advisory Board, EMS Oversight and the District Board of Health. Also, REMSA is subject to a penalty fee if it doesn’t meet its compliance metrics. Those penalty fees are used for public health education and outreach.

MYTH

FACT

Each municipality doing its own EMS would be better.



Polarized and fragmented services for something as critical as emergency medical services would be terrible for our community, maybe even deadly. In 1986, before REMSA, multiple providers meant untimely responses, no oversight or penalties for poor performance, no regulation of bills and no requirement to provide care. Patients suffered. It's why municipal, community and healthcare leaders joined to create a better, regionalized solution...REMSA. Right now, Sparks, Reno and Washoe County are considering consolidating their fire departments into one regional provider to enhance fire service and efficiency. For EMS, REMSA already operates the regionalized model they are seeking, so it's curious that a municipality would want to de-consolidate the region's EMS provider while seeking to consolidate fire response.

It would be cheaper if each municipality's fire service did EMS.



It's not clear who it would be cheaper for since right now EMS is FREE for all of Washoe County - unless REMSA transports you to a hospital. If local fire services were to suddenly take over EMS transport, then not only would they bill the patient's insurance (which REMSA does) but, but they would also continue to receive tax dollars. That is not a good "deal" for our citizens and certainly not cheaper. Plus, it doesn't cost the taxpayer anything when REMSA purchases new ambulances and invests in equipment.

REMSA is getting a great deal without ever having to bid. Going out to bid would get cities and the county a better deal.



There is no better deal than free and right now, EMS in Washoe County is free - the only time there's a cost is if REMSA transports you to a hospital. Plus, we meet or beat what is required of us under our current franchise agreement and in the next version of the agreement, we will have even more oversight. Actually, just like private ambulance services across the country, REMSA isn't getting a great deal financially but here's what REMSA's clinicians and staff do get:

- the privilege of caring for people on their worst day
- the joy to assist a mom as she delivers a baby
- the opportunity to use their skills to restart someone's heart
- the chance to literally help someone breathe easier

MYTH

REMSA uses local taxpayer money.



REMSA's model means fire services are subsidizing their profits.



FACT

REMSA has never received local taxpayer money - at all. It has always provided service without any expectation for subsidy and without any guarantee of payment. Instead, because REMSA provides about \$8.5 million in unpaid care and services to the region of about 575,000 people, it is giving the equivalent of \$15 to every man, woman and child in the region. As part of its commitment to the community, REMSA does not and cannot say no to anyone needing an ambulance response or transport, based on their ability to pay. REMSA also doesn't cherry-pick - meaning they don't choose where and when to respond based on likelihood of payment (a practice that is common when multiple EMS providers serve a community).

No one is subsidizing REMSA. Neither the fire service, nor the taxpayer subsidize REMSA's services. In fact, REMSA actually pays local fire services because it reimburses them for supplies, they use on medical responses when a fire service co-responds, sometimes more than what it would cost REMSA to purchase those same supplies. In fact, REMSA has made it easier for fire services to be subsidized by the federal government. By subcontracting the fire service for some medical calls, it allows them to access federal Ground Emergency Medical Transport funds - which are not available to REMSA Health, only to government entities. We did this because we know it allows the municipalities to access money that benefits their general funds. REMSA requires these contracted municipal ambulances to respond and provide care at the same level that it's required to, because no entity should be allowed to provide life-saving EMS services without oversight.

“REMSA Health is here to care for you. We put the community first in everything we do. We show up without exception, deliver millions in uncompensated care and hold ourselves accountable through public transparency. We are cost-efficient and ensure everyone has access to our care without any taxpayer burden. Proven reliability means being there without fail. It begins with immediate medical support from the minute we answer the call and carries through with expert care in the moments that matter most.”

Barry Duplantis, president & CEO, REMSA Health

