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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: April 29, 2015  
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#### **Emergency medical calls on the rise for North County Fire/EMS**

(Stanwood, Wash.) – North County Fire/EMS is seeing a steady increase in calls for emergency medical service. As of April, 76.6% of all emergency calls in 2015 have required an EMS response. That's a 2% increase from 2014, and more than double the number of calls since voters first passed an EMS levy in 2010 and the fire agency started providing emergency services to the City of Stanwood.

"EMS is the most widely used emergency service we have," said Fire Chief John Cermak. "We expect the number of calls to continue to increase as our population ages."

The EMS levy allows North County Fire/EMS to provide Basic and Advanced Life Support using Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and Paramedics, who can perform life-saving procedures. The levy pays for emergency personnel, their training and certifications, ambulances, maintenance, medical equipment, first aid supplies, and equipment replacement.

The Board of Fire Commissioners for North County Fire/EMS is discussing asking voters to renew the EMS levy at the same amount (50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value) and to remove the expiration date. Voters in 22 other Snohomish County communities have approved a permanent EMS levy because it stabilizes funding for the most widely used emergency service. It also saves money on election fees, which can cost as much as \$22,500 every time North County Fire/EMS needs to be on the ballot.

"That money would be better used to buy life-saving equipment and medical supplies than paper to print election ballots," said Chief Cermak.

The Board will hold two public hearings this summer before voting on a resolution to place the EMS levy on the November General Election ballot. Members of the community will be invited to attend and share their thoughts on the EMS levy renewal, or how EMS has touched their lives.

North County Regional Fire Authority, known as "North County Fire/EMS," provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 25,000 people over 107 square miles, including the City of Stanwood. The agency's funding comes from a fire levy and a levy for emergency medical service (EMS) that is collected through property taxes.

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