

ASSOCIATION OF AIR MEDICAL SERVICES



October 5, 2009

Mr. Jeff Gaspin
Chairman, NBC Universal Television Entertainment
420 South Grand Avenue, Room 501
Los Angeles, California 90071

Dear Mr. Gaspin:

I am writing to you as a trained flight nurse and president of the Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS). AAMS is the only entity serving the entire air and critical-care ground medical transport community – including operators, pilots, paramedics, EMTs, doctors and nurses.

As such, our association would like to convey our deep displeasure and concern with NBC's new television series, *Trauma*. The initial inaccurate portrayal of two helicopters flying in between high-rise buildings (and over a no-fly zone), resulting in a fatal mid-air collision in downtown San Francisco was among the first in a number of grossly inappropriate, misrepresentative incidents, actions and behaviors depicted on the program.

Other offenses included disregarding medical directors' instructions and triage protocols; transporting patients via helicopter without appropriate crew configurations or dispatch orders; violating standards of care in performing medical procedures; and exhibiting sexist, unprofessional and discriminatory behaviors. Needless to say, these multiple inaccurate depictions serve as a serious affront to the trained, dedicated professionals who work in air medicine. And of even greater concern is how public will perceive air medicine and the hundreds of thousands of medical professionals who have dedicated their lives to saving lives every day.

It is my understanding that the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians and the EMS section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs have also written letters of complaint. AAMS has been in contact with these organizations and others, and we have proposed taking our displeasure one step further: **Beginning today, we will challenge our members of to "tweet" via Twitter and post messages on Facebook every time an inappropriate, unethical or inaccurate portrayal of EMS is depicted on *Trauma*. And we will continue to do so until either your producers "get it right" – or the series goes off the air.**

In the meantime, we would be happy to lend our professional experience and expertise, to ensure that *Trauma* truthfully, accurately and appropriately depicts the delivery of air-medical services. To that end, I would like to draw your attention to the Air Medical Transport Conference (AMTC), Oct. 26-28, in San Jose. Through such sessions as "Distractions in Dispatch," "The Patient First: Safety Always," and "What to Do When It's One of Your Own," attendees learn how to avoid and deal with medical-transport accidents and related mishaps. Also, through such dedicated professionals as air-medical accident survivor Jonathan Godfrey, chair of "Vision Zero," participants learn how to make air-medical transport safer. To give you a better idea of the guidance AMTC can offer *Trauma*, I am enclosing a conference program and a news release highlighting safety-related sessions.

It is AAMS' hope that the *Trauma*'s producers will take some time away from their busy fall production schedule, the upcoming episodes of which, I understand, are being shot on location in San Francisco, and join us at AMTC, which is only about 40 minutes away. If so, we would be happy to arrange meetings with experts who can advise you on the more technical aspects of air-medical transport and EMS services. If not, we would also be happy to offer guidance in other ways or at other times, at your earliest convenience.

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It is AAMS' sincere hope that by working together and lending your show's producers our expertise, *Trauma* will serve to reward rather than insult our nation's highly ethical, devoted, hardworking and dedicated air-medical professionals – because that is the only portrayal they truly deserve.

Sincerely,

Sandra Kinkade
President, AAMS

cc: Air Medical Physician Association, Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association, Helicopter Association International, EMS Section, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Flight Paramedics, National Association of Air Medical Communication Specialists, National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, National EMS Pilots Association, National Association of State EMS Officials