

CALNENA



October 28, 2008

Dr. Phil McGraw,

I recently appeared as a guest “expert” on the October 21st taping of your show on 9-1-1. I am writing to voice my concerns about the tone and tenor of that show and the somewhat deceptive practices used to elicit my participation. In addition, some of the “facts” you cited were inaccurate.

In conversations with your producers I was led to believe that I was participating as a representative of the 9-1-1 profession and would be there to provide educational information to the public about 9-1-1. I was aware that two tragic incidents that occurred in Florida would be discussed on the show but not that these isolated incidents would be used to indict an entire profession. The vast majority of 9-1-1 dispatchers do an outstanding job with little recognition and save hundreds of lives every day. To sensationalize two tragic events and use those events to condemn the thousands of dedicated women and men who work as 9-1-1 dispatchers is irresponsible. I was particularly concerned that there was no time allotted to talk about the very positive role that 9-1-1 plays in this country.

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In the latter portion of the show you cited some statistics about San Francisco Emergency Services delayed response to medical calls resulting in 470 deaths. Those statistics are grossly inaccurate. You also attributed a call from Fulton County, Georgia to the San Francisco Center. Simple fact checking by your staff could have avoided these errors. I hope you will correct them prior to airing the show.

I agreed to participate on your show because you have a reputation for fairness and objectivity. Unfortunately, I experienced neither in this case. 9-1-1, like any human based system, is not perfect and there are varying degrees of training, technological support and compensation for 9-1-1 dispatchers throughout the Country. These are legitimate issues that warrant discussion and public awareness. Should you choose to present a more balanced forum on 9-1-1, I would be happy to provide you with the names of subject matter experts from throughout the Country.

Sincerely,

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