

Tuesday, July 14, 2026

FROM: Valerie Swisher
TO: Friends of Franz Valley
(comprising COPE; FV Mothers Club; FV GMRS Network; Fire Danger Sign Team; FV GroupMe)

Hello best neighbors on the planet,

I want to share what happened to me in the early morning yesterday, and get your ideas for how best to move forward to insure that our little slice of paradise provides appropriate emergency response for the best neighbors on the planet.

Briefly:

I woke up with chest pains at around 4 AM. By 4:30 AM, we decided to call 911.

It took an extremely long time for the first responders to get here. And I mean at least 15-20 minutes. (I would like to find out exactly how long it took.)

The first responders were fire fighter/EMTs. I did not catch which station they were from (I was lying on the floor). (ED. NOTE: Calistoga Fire sent first responders)

It took even longer for the ambulance to arrive.

The ambulance was from Bell's Ambulance in Healdsburg. (We can all do the math.)

After they stabilized me and loaded me into the ambulance, **the driver went out of my driveway to the RIGHT to Highway 128.**

I tried to tell them that **the fastest way to Kaiser was LEFT to Porter Creek.**

They did not want to go that way. **They said they didn't have cell service and did not know the way** (um WHAT?).

They drove to 128, Right to Petrified Forest Road, Right to Porter Creek.

By the time we drove by Camp Newman, a good 20 minutes extra had passed.
It took at least 40-45 minutes to get to Kaiser.

If Greg and I had driven ourselves, we could have arrived in 15-20 minutes - especially at 5 AM.

Everyone did their jobs. I am not complaining AT ALL. They were competent, kind, "on it."

The system, however, failed. Had I been in cardiac arrest or having a stroke or God forbid something else, I doubt I would have survived.
I don't know for sure, but I do know that the system failed.

In the midst of my chemo, this is not really a challenge I can take on right now. However, we cannot afford to let this happen to any of us again. You are all way too precious to let this go unaddressed.

I am wondering if any of you have any ideas as to how I might proceed and if one or more of you might help me out with this (since my energy is pretty low)?

Again, I do not want to cause a big ruckus of complaints. The professionals did their jobs. **It was just the wrong team of people to send from a location much too far away. And I think we need to address this because none of us is getting any younger (alas).**

Sorry to do this via email. Please help me to know how best to proceed.
I love you all more than I can express.

Val