

Transit) program, offers a genuine alternative to motorists.

Fortunately, help may be on the way. The Carter administration's energy

the present target of putting on the road 3,000 new buses a year in the next decade would be increased to 5,000 a year. Transit within Nassau-Suffolk-Queens could

circle's to be broken, Long Island's congressmen have their work cut out for them when legislating the energy program resumes after Labor Day.

The Ambulance Service Must Come Clean

Amid a blistering dispute over which hospitals to close, some New Yorkers in desperate need of medical care are already failing to reach help in time—because city ambulances don't respond fast enough. In case after case, stricken people wait vainly for an Emergency Medical Services vehicle.

It can be acknowledged at once that the EMS has had serious personnel and equipment shortages attributable to the city's budget strains.

But it is also a fact that EMS corps-

men report some near-incredible practices, such as a policy of listing non-functioning vehicles and even deactivated units as if they were really operational. And there is a serious discrepancy between what EMS officials claim is the working staff—684 paramedics, corpsmen and drivers—and what the crewmen themselves say: They maintain that the figure includes supervisors and persons on sick leave or disabled.

After Newsday began an inquiry into ambulance services, the EMS changed its

method of recording emergency calls. The new procedure, EMS staff people feel, shows a response record that looks better than it is.

That may not be exactly the same as doctoring medical records, but it is close enough. If the EMS is making a specialty of misleading record-keeping, it cannot possibly make a credible case for more staff and equipment; in fact, the disclosures to date raise acute questions about how competently the management is using what it has now.

Keeping the Informers Informed

Police informers are in the unenviable position of living two lives: One as apparent criminal or terrorist, the other as a trusted source of police information.

It is a perilous existence—living among criminals without being one. And, in one case, it led to the indictment for the 1965 murder of a civil rights worker of an FBI informer spying on the Ku Klux Klan.

It was to avoid such tragedies that the FBI's agents three years ago to instruct them not to violate the law.

This past week the bureau issued an audit of itself that revealed that some agents in half its field offices either had not issued those instructions, or at least had not certified that they had.

The bureau's self-audit was intended, at least in part, to forestall an effort in Congress to open its files on informants to the General Accounting Office. It concluded that, generally, the bureau was following Justice Department guidelines.

But the failure of some agents proper-

ly to instruct their informants emphasizes even more forcefully how important it is that an FBI charter with specific limitation and guidelines on the use of informants be passed. Congress has a proposed charter before it now.

Nothing can guarantee that every rule will be understood or obeyed. But a charter clearly setting out the FBI informants' role is a logical and necessary way forcefully to delineate where the line between the informants' two lives is to be drawn.