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KQED's *Truly CA* begins with a "Firestorm" for National EMS Week

-- "Firestorm" reveals the shocking reality of a Los Angeles fire station --
-- Premieres Sunday, May 16 at 6pm on KQED Public Television --

April 26, 2010, San Francisco, CA --- As the battle over health care reform charges on, KQED's award-winning independent documentary series **Truly CA** (www.kqed.org/trulyca) begins its sixth season with a timely film about the role firefighters play in the current medical system. **Firestorm** profiles a Los Angeles fire station where, instead of fighting fires, paramedics run themselves ragged as 911 becomes the speed dial for a crumbling health care system. As National EMS Week (May 16-22, 2010) begins, **Truly CA: Firestorm** premieres Sunday, May 16 at 6pm on KQED Public Television 9.

All Los Angeles firefighters are trained paramedics, but under current conditions, the LAFD handles all emergency medical services and the vast majority of the department's work is medical – rather than fire – related. **Firestorm** follows LAFD Station 65 in South Los Angeles's Watts neighborhood, whose residents are largely uninsured and desperate for medical attention. The one-hour film fuses cinéma-vérité, still photographs, and in-depth reporting to illuminate the systemic problems in emergency medical services (EMS), from ambulance diversions (when emergency rooms are so crowded they close) to ER boarding (keeping admitted ER patients in the ER because of a lack of inpatient beds).

Firestorm shows LAFD paramedics standing in hospital hallways waiting for beds to free up, driving longer and longer distances in search of hospitals that are still accepting patients, and exhausting themselves answering non-urgent calls that could easily be addressed by primary care doctors. The problems facing Los Angeles are a snapshot of the entire health care system in the United States, and **Firestorm** reveals just how dangerous the situation has become.

This film marks the beginning of an all new season of **Truly CA** films on KQED Public Television. True stories about life in the Golden State come alive in this showcase of local and national filmmakers. Upcoming films in the sixth season include profiles of a Northern California hippie commune, a Pentecostal minister who dreams of creating a Hollywood sci-fi epic, a San Francisco musician, and entertainer/activist Wavy Gravy.

About Truly CA

Winner of five Northern California Emmy Awards, **Truly CA** is KQED's series of independent documentaries about life in the Golden State. Since 2007, select **Truly CA** films have been presented by KQED to stations throughout California. It airs monthly on Sundays at 6pm on KQED 9HD. **Truly CA** is a KQED production presented in association with the **Bay Area Video Coalition** and the **San Francisco Film Society**.

About KQED Public Television

KQED Public Television (www.kqed.org), a service of Northern California Public Broadcasting, Inc. (NCPB), is one of the nation's most-watched public television stations. KQED produces local weekly series in high definition, available on Comcast On Demand, including: *QUEST*;

Spark; Check, Please! Bay Area and *This Week in Northern California*; and national series: *Jacques Pépin: More Fast Food My Way* and *Jean-Michel Cousteau: Ocean Adventures*. KQED's digital television channels include 9HD, Life, World, Kids, and V-me, and are available 24/7 on Comcast. Download programs for viewing and video podcasts at www.kqed.org, featuring unique content on one of the most-visited station sites in public broadcasting.

About BAVC

The **Bay Area Video Coalition** is the nation's largest noncommercial media arts center dedicated to providing access to media, education and technology. **BAVC** is a production facility, an affordable training center, a pioneer in technology-based workforce development and a critical resource for independent filmmakers.

About San Francisco Film Society

The **San Francisco Film Society** is a nonprofit arts and education organization dedicated to celebrating film and the moving image in all its glorious forms. SFFS year-round programs and events are concentrated in four core areas: Celebrating Internationalism; Inspiring Bay Area Youth; Showcasing Bay Area Film Culture; and Exploring New Digital Media. The Film Society shows the best of world cinema year-round on its SFFS Screen at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas; presents the longest-running film festival in the Americas, the SF International (April 2010); publishes a daily online magazine, SF360.org, featuring broad-ranging news and features on Bay Area film and media; annually reaches more than 7,000 students ages 6–18 with its acclaimed media literacy programs; and provides crucial support to the Bay Area filmmaking community through SFFS filmmaker services including FilmHouse Residencies, Fiscal Sponsorship, the Herbert Family Filmmaking Grants, SFFS Film Arts Forums and professional-level filmmaker classes.

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