
MEMORANDUM

COTW-C 01-2019

Subject: EMS System Transformation Project

Date: March 7, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole

From: Kevin Smith, Chief, Niagara Emergency Medical Services

Executive Summary

In the last 6 years, demand on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in Niagara has risen 50%. Through the commitment of both present and previous Council to ensure high quality emergency care for our communities, over that same time period, additional frontline resources (paramedics) have been enhanced by 25%. With forecasts of continued growth of 911 utilization at these rates over the next 10 years, system delivery within the current model is not economically sustainable nor is it providing the best possible mobile health services to our communities. While efforts continue to ensure response time reliability for the most critical patients, the care providers themselves are negatively impacted by these system pressures.

In February 2018, Niagara EMS staff commenced work as directed by Council on what has been coined the System Transformation Project. The objective of this initiative is to 'redefine the patient journey' for people calling 911 for health services. While historically 911 had been primarily accessed for patients suffering from a serious illness or injury requiring a time-sensitive emergency response by paramedics and conveyance to an emergency department, the evidence today shows that a large portion of the drivers of the increase in EMS demand is originating with incidents of lower acuity (non-emergent) in nature where health needs may be better provided through alternate resources other than an emergency department.

PHD 17-2017 provided detailed information on the approach to be taken not to simply follow traditional EMS service models but actively to look for innovative ways to deliver mobile health services that are not only more efficient but better meet the needs of patients. Proposed changes to transform the delivery of services include response plan policy modifications, implementing a secondary triage process, development of integrated health teams, improved allied agency tiered response and creating alternate response options through enhanced clinical pathways.

In the coming weeks, Council will be receiving reports on the progress of this work at which time staff will be providing recommendations for Council's consideration. The objective of the Committee of the Whole is to provide an enhanced level of

understanding of Niagara EMS, its evolution, the system pressures of today and opportunities for future sustainability. With a new term of Council and many councilors who may not have the history of the decisions made to date, ensuring Council has full information and context on the entire project in advance, as well as the opportunity to discuss issues and explore questions in detail, will assist in the decision-making on the more focused proposals in the ensuing reports.

Items for discussion on March 7 will include:

- Recent history of Niagara EMS including governance, municipal responsibilities and system design.
- Current system performance and the influencing factors such as increased call volumes, health care restructuring and offload delays.
- A brief review of the reports to Council over the past 4 years related to system pressures and the outcome of those reports.
- Recognition of the human impact the system pressures have on people working within the system.
- Review of the System Transformation Project and the early results being seen in improved service delivery, system stabilization and future sustainability.
- Next steps for Council decision-making.

As a supplement to the meeting's proceedings, static displays including an ambulance, equipment and technology will be set up in the foyer before the meeting from 6:00-6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted and signed by:

Kevin Smith
Chief
Niagara Emergency Medical Services