

Memorandum

PHD-C 7-2026

Subject: Efficiencies in Emergency Medical Services

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Karen Lutz-Graul, Chief Niagara Emergency Medical Services

This memo and the accompanying presentation provide an overview of the efficiencies achieved in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in 2025 and the positive impacts they are having now and into the future. Through process improvements, partnerships, and creative problem-solving, we identified savings that can be redirected to help offset unavoidable budget pressures, such as rising fuel costs and increasing call volumes.

In 2025 EMS realized \$611,326.14 in savings in a largely non-discretionary, fixed cost environment. Ongoing efficiency initiatives and targeted technology investments demonstrate responsible financial stewardship while sustaining reliable emergency medical services for Niagara residents.

Strategic Partnerships

- Leasing and repurposing the Welland Fire Station on Prince Charles Drive as the Welland North EMS Station reduced annual lease costs by \$12,000 and deferred the need for constructing a new station. This approach also has the potential to avoid future spending on land acquisition and new construction; these additional savings will be reported once they are confirmed.
- Partnering with Hamilton EMS for workplace violence training avoided \$9,000 in instructor costs.
- \$197,000 in Ministry of Natural Resources funding was secured for a Command Trailer to support emergency incident management and inter-agency collaboration.

Process Improvements

- Through enhanced injury management we reduced lost time days by 33.45% and WSIB costs by \$329,910 (6.04%) compared to 2024.

- Process improvements to sick - time reporting reduced sick hours by 6,180, resulting in savings of \$29,024 after backfill and staffing replacement costs.

Contract Optimization

- Wi- Fi implementation and mobile data pooling reduced cellular costs by 75%, saving \$22,610 in 2025 and an antipated \$66,582 annually starting in 2026.
- A Medication Rebate Program for expired medications saved \$11,782.14 in 2025, with projected annual savings in 2026 of \$16,000.

Technology Investment and Cost Avoidance

In addition to the upcoming savings mentioned above, this year's implementation of Operative IQ, a fleet and asset management platform that will replace fragmented manual systems, will result in a cost avoidance of \$20,419 after initial investments. This will improve fleet monitoring, extend equipment lifespan, reduce inventory waste, and support a shared system with Seniors Services, avoiding duplicate procurement.

Additional Context

The EMS cost structure is largely non - discretionary. Labour represents 85.2% of the budget and is established through collective bargaining or arbitration, to meet legislated service levels and response requirements. The remaining 14.8% supports essential operational costs, including fleet replacement, fuel, medical supplies, and equipment.

In closing, the work done by the team in 2025 and looking ahead affirm our commitment to mitigating system pressures by finding efficiencies, maximizing value and maintaining the highest standard of care.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Karen Lutz-Graul, B.Sc.C.P., ACP
Chief Niagara Emergency Medical Services

This memo was prepared in consultation with Michael Leckey, Program Financial Specialist.