

Clause No. 5 in Report No. 11 of the Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on June 26, 2014.

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PURCHASE OF MEDICATIONS AND LINEN SERVICES
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated May 29, 2014 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region enter into separate agreements with Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Health, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of medications used by Emergency Medical Services, totalling \$991,000 for a five-year term.
2. The Region enter into separate agreements with Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Health, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of linen and laundry services used by Emergency Medical Services, together totalling \$905,000 for a five year term.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to execute these agreements.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks authorization to enter into direct purchase agreements with Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Health, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of medications and linen and laundry services required by York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Direct purchases having a total cost exceeding \$100,000 are subject to Council approval. Staff is requesting the approval of new contracts with the identified providers to ensure a continuous supply chain of fundamental supplies.

3. BACKGROUND

Procurement, storage, and tracking of medications and linen are complex and are tightly managed on a larger scale by hospitals. Regional hospitals have extended their expertise and economies of scale with these items to the Region's EMS Branch. Utilizing regional hospital resources allows EMS to efficiently maintain the required medication supply levels on an immediate and as needed basis. The EMS Branch has been purchasing medications from regional hospitals since 2000.

Council last approved the purchase of medications and linen from regional hospitals through the adoption of Clause No. 7 of Report No. 7, *Purchase of Medications and Linen Services for Emergency Medical Services*, of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee at its meeting on October 23, 2008.

Medications are required by EMS for the delivery of pre-hospital care

In the performance of their duties under the *Ambulance Act*, paramedics administer numerous medications and perform medical acts under the authority of the Central East Pre-hospital Care Program, Medical Director appointed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Medications and their use are governed by the Canadian *Food and Drugs Act* and the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

Appropriate management of linen and laundry services ensures the prevention of cross-contamination of patients and protection from the elements during pre-hospital phase of care

EMS requires linen and laundry services to ensure each patient is provided with clean, fresh linen (i.e., sheets, blankets, pillow cases, etc.). Linen must be properly laundered to ensure there is no cross-contamination from patient to patient. In addition, linen must be restocked on a timely basis to ensure service efficiency is maintained. Hospitals manage their linen and laundry services on a large scale through a mixture of in-house and contracted services. Regional hospitals have extended their expertise and economies of scale with these services to the Region's EMS Branch. Immediately after transferring patients, paramedics have access to dispose of soiled laundry and acquire fresh linens prior to returning to service without delay. EMS has been purchasing linen and laundry services from regional hospitals since 2000.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

As public institutions, hospitals have high accountability, standards and safeguards to ensure quality service is delivered. All three regional hospitals (Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Health, and Markham Stouffville Hospital) are accredited by Accreditation Canada. All three regional hospitals are members of buying groups and complete competitive bidding processes that satisfy York Region's competitive Purchasing Bylaw. The provision of these services by hospitals continues to meet the operational requirements of EMS.

York Region hospitals provide pharmacy and linen and laundry services to EMS

Each hospital has a pharmacy, staffed with dedicated pharmacists, which are responsible to procure, control, track and dispense medications manufactured by various pharmaceutical companies. EMS needs these functions, but on a much smaller scale. To duplicate this level of expertise within the Region for EMS would be costly.

Linen and laundry service is a key component of the EMS supply chain. Every patient transported by EMS receives clean fresh linen for protection from the environment and to protect privacy. EMS keeps a ready supply of EMS linens on a designated cart at the hospitals. Partnering with our public hospital colleagues within the Region allows EMS to leverage this synergy.

Entering into supply contracts for linen with regional hospitals is the preferred option as it leverages existing supply, distribution, collection and cleaning processes without duplicating parallel services

Maintaining contracts with the three regional hospitals is the preferred supply option for EMS as this negates additional costs to maintain infrastructure to distribute and recapture both clean and soiled linen separate from the hospital system. Many EMS providers in the Province are required to source linen supply services separate from hospital services and incur higher associated costs.

If York Region hospitals did not provide contracted linen services to EMS, a separate linen system would need to be put into place. This would require the purchase of linen and separate laundry hampers in hospitals. Additional costs would be incurred to have linen delivered and collected. Paramedics would be required to retrieve contaminated linen from patients after transferring them from the ambulance stretcher and place into EMS specific laundry hampers. When used linen is handled by paramedics at locations away from regional hospitals, the linen would need to be transferred in EMS vehicles for later collection. Containing used linen in EMS vehicles is problematic due to space constraints and infection control requirements. Partnering with our public hospital colleagues within the Region allows EMS to leverage these synergies.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Current contracts with the regional hospitals for the supply of medications and linen services expired on March 31, 2014.

In 2013, EMS spent \$143,400 on medications, and \$155,480 for linen and laundry services.

The 2014 Approved Operating budget for EMS includes sufficient funds for the cost for medications as well as linen and laundry services. Over the next five years, it is estimated that the total cost of medications will be approximately at \$991,000. The total cost, over the next 5 years for linen and laundry services is estimated at \$905,000. The five-year total costs are based on current consumption and anticipated growth in call demand. No unit price increase is anticipated. All medication, linen and laundry related costs will be managed within the annual approved Operating Budget for the EMS Branch.

Of the options for linen supply and laundry services available, leveraging the point of care model at hospitals is the most efficient. Leveraging this model avoids the need to purchase and maintain linen, including sheets, pillow cases, and blankets as well as the infrastructure to wash, process, distribute clean linen and collect soiled linen.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

There are no local municipal implications associated with this report.

7. CONCLUSION

Regional hospitals have the expertise and the economies of scale to provide medications and linen services to the Region's EMS Branch. Regional hospitals are accountable institutions funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and governed by Ontario's *Public Hospitals Act*. The products and services supplied by regional hospitals continue to meet the operational requirements of EMS.

It is recommended that York Region enter into direct purchase agreements as outlined in this report.

For more information on this report, please contact Norm Barrette, Chief and General Manager, Emergency Medical Services at Ext. 74709.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.