



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of Committee of the Whole

FROM: Adelina Urbanski, Commissioner of Community and Health Services

DATE: April 3, 2014

RE: **Emergency Medical Services Expanding Paramedic Scope of Practice Update**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an update on the Emergency Medical Services Expanding Paramedicine in the Community (EPIC) project trial as requested at Committee. The next update on the EPIC project trial is expected by the end of the fourth quarter of 2014.

Further to the update provided on August 12, 2013, work continues on developing programs to expand the scope of paramedicine in York Region and on developing collaborations between Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and other health and social support resources.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is supporting the development of community paramedicine

On January 21, 2014, the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for Ontario, announced \$6 million dollars in funding to support or develop community paramedicine programs in Ontario. York Region EMS plans to apply for funding under this announcement and is awaiting direction on the application process.

A Community Paramedicine Program Evaluation is in progress by the Health Innovations Group on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. This evaluation includes qualitative and quantitative analysis, and uses various evaluation methods including interviews, electronic surveys and site visits of existing community paramedicine programs. On February 27, 2014, York Region EMS hosted a site visit from the Health Innovations Group which involved York Region EMS management, community paramedics, and community stakeholders participating in focus groups.

Expanding Paramedicine in the Community trial update

As previously reported, York Region EMS is currently involved in the Expanding Paramedicine in the Community trial. Currently, 226 patients are enrolled with 110 patients in the intervention group receiving care from community paramedics. In an effort to increase the sample size of the trial, Rescu, the emergency medicine research unit at St. Michael's Hospital, and York Region EMS have recruited two additional Family Health Teams, and the process to add these two Family Health Teams is in progress.

Rescu, the research lead in the EPIC trial, has applied for three funding grants. On February 18, 2014, York Region EMS senior staff accompanied Rescu officials to the University of Toronto, Faculty of Medicine to present the EPIC trial as part of a grant application. The EPIC grant application is ranked in the top five grant applications with the Faculty of Medicine and staff is expecting an announcement on this and other grants in the coming weeks.

Update on work related to frequent 9-1-1 callers

Plans continue to be developed to provide home visits to these clients to assess their needs and reason for repeated 9-1-1 use. Partnerships are being developed with regional and community agencies, including Health Links, York Social Services Network, York Social Services - Outreach Workers, Community Care Access Centre and the Leap of Faith Team to assist these callers and decrease their repeat 9-1-1 usage.

Treat-on-scene pilot project at long term care facilities

In 2013, EMS spent 6,912 hours transporting patients from nursing homes to hospital emergency departments. EMS is working in collaboration with Housing and Long-Term Care Branch, Legal and Risk services and the Long-Term Care Medical Director to develop a treat-on-scene pilot project. Staff is currently exploring collaborations with Emergency Health Services Nova Scotia and Dalhousie University as similar models in Nova Scotia have demonstrated that 70% of patients seen by expanded scope paramedics in long term care did not require transportation to the emergency department.

York Region EMS participation on steering committees and working groups

York Region EMS participates on the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) Health Links Steering Committee, the Southlake Health Links Steering Committee and the South West LHIN Health Links Steering Committee. The LHIN has asked York Region EMS to lead a group to develop pathways to assist in the management of 'at-risk' clients identified by EMS. There has also been discussion about using the EPIC community paramedics to assist in the management of Health Links clients in the community.

York Region EMS currently has representation on the provincial 'Community Referrals Emergency Medical Services' and 'Paramedics and Elders at Risk of Independence Loss Working Group', which is developing a standardized risk assessment and referral process to the Community Care Access Centre for all paramedic services in Ontario. This working group is

also developing paramedic training materials on risk assessment and evaluation methods to determine the effectiveness of paramedic risk assessments and referrals by paramedics.

The evidence collected relating to community paramedicine programs may demonstrate a relief on health system pressures. This focus supports the *2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan* objective to *'optimize the health of the community for all ages and stages through health care delivery, protection, prevention and promotion activities.'*

If you require additional information, please contact Norm Barrette, EMS Chief and General Manager at extension 74709.

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