



May 17, 2017

To: Mayor and Council, City of Hamilton

From: Brenda Flaherty, Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations and Chief Operating Officer,
Hamilton Health Sciences

Re: Ambulance Services 2016 Report

Hamilton Health Sciences would like to provide additional context to the **Ambulance Services 2016 Report**, which we kindly received last week from Michael Sanderson, Chief of Emergency Medical Services, ahead of the report's presentation to the Emergency & Community Services Committee on May 18, 2017.

The report highlights the challenge of hospital offload delays and notes that delays of longer than two hours are increasing. More than half of the Code Zero events (when there is no ambulance available) occurred during the last three months of 2016.

In September 2016, Hamilton Health Sciences began experiencing extraordinary volume challenges and patient flow pressures in our adult care (at the Hamilton General Hospital and Juravinski Hospital). These pressures continued unabated throughout the fall and remain today. The capacity challenges are as a result of three interrelated issues:

- ED Admissions: an increasing volume of patients and more acutely ill patients;
- Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients: an increase in the number of patients who no longer need acute care, but can't be discharged because there is no place for them to go, e.g. long-term care or a transitional bed (180+ patients on any given day);
- Occupancy: the pressure we experience as a result of the above, requiring HHS to operate at more than 100 per cent capacity

We would like Hamilton City Council to know that we are actively pursuing solutions to these issues with both the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network and with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, including the expansion of transitional beds in the community for ALC patients.

In the meantime, we have opened temporary “express” beds, extended hours in day-stay units and have opened contingency beds wherever we can make room, including sunrooms and waiting areas, operating as many as 100 unfunded beds at any time.

We are indebted to our staff and physicians for their continued commitment to high quality care despite the very trying circumstances.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.