




CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Hamilton Paramedic Service

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ministry of Health Funding for Pediatric Intensive Care Transport Ambulance (HSC23069) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Michael Sanderson (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7741
SUBMITTED BY:	Grace Mater General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Chief, Hamilton Paramedic Service, or their designate, be authorized and directed to initiate provision of a second dedicated ambulance to support the Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care programs at McMaster Children's Hospital in accordance with the revised Schedules "B" and "D" (attached as Appendix "A") to the already existing July 4, 2019 Accountability Agreement Section 5.2 (attached as Appendix "B");
- (b) That the Chief, Hamilton Paramedic Service, or their designate, be authorized and directed to execute any required ancillary and/or renewal agreements between the Ministry of Health and the City of Hamilton to support the ongoing provision of dedicated interfacility ambulance(s) to support the Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care programs at McMaster Children's Hospital between the City of Hamilton and the Ministry of Health in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and
- (c) That the Hamilton Paramedic Service complement be increased by ten (10) full-time equivalent paramedic positions to cover all staffing and absence backfill requirements for the dedicated inter-facility transport ambulance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Report HSC19021 previously approved by Council on June 26, 2019, established authority for the addition of ten (10) full-time equivalent paramedic positions and the acquisition of an additional ambulance and all related equipment to provide a dedicated ambulance resource supporting the McMaster Neonatal Intensive Care Unit team in accordance with an Accountability Agreement. The Accountability Agreement provides for 100% funding of all capital, operating, and employee related costs to carry out the program as described in Schedule “A” to that agreement. Schedule “B” which outlines the provided Budget for the program has been revised and updated annually since that time.

On October 31, 2023, the Minister of Health approved additional funding in the amount of \$1,100,489 prorated in 2023, and annualized base funding of \$1,467,319 for 2024, plus \$381,199 for capital acquisition to establish a second dedicated ambulance (attached as Appendix “C”) in response to our May 29, 2023, project proposal (attached as Appendix “D”).

This additional dedicated ambulance funding will bring 2023 approved funding to a maximum of \$2,958,452, and base funding for 2024 to \$2,944,083.

In accordance with the agreement where the dedicated ambulance(s) are not being utilized by either the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit or Pediatric Intensive Care Unit teams they remain available for response to emergency 9-1-1 calls.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The Ministry of Health is providing 100% funding for the capital and staffing costs of the dedicated transport vehicle therefore, there is no net levy impact.

Staffing: Council previously approved ten (10) full-time equivalents to provide the initial dedicated Neonatal Intensive Care Unit ambulance. This recent approval requires the addition of a further ten (10) full-time equivalent staff to provide a second dedicated ambulance coverage 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 52 weeks of the year, inclusive of all related backfill costs.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Hamilton Health Sciences McMaster Children's Hospital operates a 47 bed, tertiary level Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and a Pediatric Intensive Care Unit with capacity to accommodate 12 patients. These Intensive Care Units are the referral centres for a catchment area of 2.2 million people and 27,000 births. The closest adjoining similar Intensive Care Unit programs are in London and in Toronto. An outreach program, and medical transport team, is operated by the McMaster Children's Hospital to enable the highest level of assessment, stabilization, and treatment at various outlying hospitals and to then provide care of the patient during transport by ambulance from the referring hospital back to McMaster Children's Hospital.

Dedicated ambulance resources provide capacity for a McMaster Children's Hospital transport team and related equipment to be transported from McMaster Children's Hospital to the referring hospital, to stabilize the patient at the referring hospital, and when the patient is ready for transport back to McMaster Children's Hospital.

In accordance with the *Ambulance Act*, the core legislated operating responsibility for the City of Hamilton is to provide the required resources for the provision of emergency land ambulance service to meet the needs of the residents and visitors to the City of Hamilton. Provision of dedicated ambulance transport resources to pick up a medical team and equipment at McMaster Children's Hospital, take them to an out of town referring hospital, wait for the medical team at the referring hospital, or to return the medical team, equipment, and patient from the out of town referring hospital back to McMaster Children's Hospital is outside the core funding responsibility of the City of Hamilton. Accordingly, the Ministry of Health provides the required 100% funding to provide dedicated ambulance resources.

Since the 2019 implementation of the dedicated Neonatal Intensive Care Unit ambulance utilization of the resource has increased and it became evident that their Pediatric Intensive Care Unit also required a level of dedicated transport support. Following discussion with McMaster, and with the support of the Provincial Committee on Maternal and Child Health, it was agreed that Hamilton Paramedic Service would submit a proposal for the operation of a second dedicated ambulance to support both the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Pediatric Intensive Care Unit programs at McMaster Children's Hospital.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to the *Ambulance Act* (the Act) the City of Hamilton is the Designated Delivery Agent for all land ambulance services provided in the City of Hamilton. This service is known, and operated under Certificate 718, as the Hamilton Paramedic Service. The Hamilton Paramedic Service is the sole ambulance provider for the entire City of Hamilton, an area of approximately 1,117 square kilometres and a population of approximately 537,000 people.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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In accordance with the Act, the Regulations pursuant to the Act, and the various Directives and Standards pursuant to both the Act and the Regulations, the City of Hamilton, in part:

- Determines the level of land ambulance service required to provide an appropriate level of service to the public within the City of Hamilton;
- Funds the cost of land ambulance service required to meet the needs of the public;
- Receives a conditional grant from the Province of Ontario as subsidy for the cost of provision of land ambulance service;
- Ensures their provision of land ambulance service meets the standards required by the Province of Ontario to achieve and to maintain certification; and
- Ensures the plan provided to the Ministry of Health Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) for the deployment of the land ambulance resources it provides is approved in the manner designated by the Ministry of Health.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Ongoing consultation has occurred with McMaster Children's Hospital and with the Ministry of Health since the original 2019 approval.

Finance and Administration – Financial Planning Administration and Policy of the City of Hamilton were involved in the development and costing of all aspects of the initial 2019 proposal, each subsequent year budget submission, and the May 2023 proposal.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The need to support the McMaster Children's Hospital outreach team activities in responding to out of town referral hospitals and returning these critical patients to a higher level of care has increased. The received approval provides additional dedicated ambulance transport capacity to support these needs without negatively impacting City of Hamilton taxpayers.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report HSC23069 - Revised Schedules B and D

Appendix "B" to Report HSC23069 - Accountability Agreement

Appendix "C" to Report HSC23069 - Minister's Letter

Appendix "D" to Report HSC23069 – Project Proposal