




Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 7, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Ambulance Dispatch Information Update (HSC23045) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Michael Sanderson Chief, Paramedic Service Health and Safe Communities
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At their May 24, 2017 meeting Council approved a motion providing the following direction to staff:

(a) That staff be directed and authorized to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to discuss alternatives for collaboration in the operation of the Hamilton ambulance dispatch centre including:

- (i) Pursuing the establishment in the short term of a performance contract or alternative governance models for land ambulance dispatch outlining roles, responsibilities and performance expectations;
- (ii) Pursuing the provision of current, real time, data from the computerized ambulance dispatch system to support contemporaneous decision making, land ambulance service delivery, and the needs of our partners including hospitals and other emergency services; and
- (iii) Determining the feasibility, terms and costs for the City of Hamilton to assume operation of ambulance dispatch function for the City of Hamilton in the same manner as has been developed for the City of Toronto, the Region of Niagara, or the City of Ottawa.

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.

INFORMATION

The *Ambulance Act* (R.S.O. 1990, Chapter A.19), Section 4.1, identifies that the functions of the Minister of Health include requirements to:

- ensure the existence of a balanced and integrated system of ambulance services and communication services used in dispatching ambulances; and
- to establish, maintain, and operate communication services, alone or in co-operation with others, and to fund such services

Ontario Regulation 537/00 (O.Reg. 537/00), Part VII, Section 16, issued pursuant Section 22 of the *Ambulance Act*, requires that the operator of an ambulance communications service be party to an agreement with the Ministry of Health for the provision of that communication service.

Provincially the Ministry of Health currently funds the cost of staffing, equipment, and operation of 22 ambulance dispatch operations across the province. Eleven of these dispatch operations, including the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC), are operated directly by the Ministry of Health while the remaining eleven are operated through transfer payment agreements with various entities including the City of Ottawa, the City of Toronto, and Niagara Region.

In preparation for the downloading of responsibility for the provision of land ambulance service pursuant to enactment of Bill 152 (Services Improvement Act, 2017) the City of Hamilton created a Dispatch Task Force to review options and opportunities for operation of the land ambulance dispatch. The Dispatch Task Force report of June 27, 2000, recommended that a consolidated Emergency Communications Service be created subject to approval and transfer of control of the ambulance dispatch from the Ministry of Health to the City of Hamilton.

While the recommendation to transfer control of the ambulance dispatch was not approved by the Ministry of Health at that time, the issue has been an item of ongoing discussion.

On July 11, 2007, Council received Report HES06005(a) (Resource and Deployment Review of Emergency Medical Services) which included a recommendation to investigate the feasibility, terms and costs for the City of Hamilton to assume Central Ambulance Communications Centre operations in Hamilton in the same fashion as the Niagara Region Model. Report HES06005(b) was provided to Committee and Council in March 2008 regarding the outcome of meetings held.

Report CES17022, received by Council May 24, 2017, resulted in the above motion directing staff to pursue referenced direction, amongst other issues, to pursue discussion with the Ministry to establish an agreement for assumption of responsibility

for the operation of the Hamilton land ambulance dispatch service in accordance with the *Ambulance Act* and O.Reg. 537/00.

Ongoing discussions were held with Ministry of Health staff at the Director level without conclusive action following this direction.

Report HSC20014 further outlined recommendations provided to the Ministry of Health including modernization of ambulance dispatch services, the transfer of operational responsibility of dispatch service to the municipality, and the funding of dispatch operations, staffing, and equipment.

Following consultation with City of Hamilton Senior Leadership a May 25, 2023, letter was written to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health (Appendix “A”) requesting that the Minister exercise her authority under the *Ambulance Act* to direct staff to engage in negotiation of an agreement for the transfer of responsibility for operation of the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communications Centre to the City of Hamilton.

This issue was raised with Minister Jones and her staff most recently at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario meeting by Mayor Horwath, General Manager Burden, and Chief Sanderson.

While inquiries have been made of Ministerial staff regarding the status of this request there has been no formal response received to date.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report HSC23045 – Letter to Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.