




Hamilton

**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT**  
**Hamilton Paramedic Service**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	December 7, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Future Health Services Inc. – Single Source (HSC23064) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Russell Crocker (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7739
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Michael Sanderson Chief, Hamilton Paramedic Service Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That Council approve the single source procurement, pursuant to Procurement Policy #11 – Non-competitive Procurements, for the Remote Patient Monitoring supplies, equipment and technology used by the Hamilton Paramedic Service until December 31, 2028;
- (b) That the Chief, Hamilton Paramedic Service be authorized to negotiate, enter into and execute a Contract and any ancillary documents required to give effect thereto with Future Health Services Inc. or any of its successors or assigns that provide the remote patient monitoring supplies, equipment, or technology used by the Hamilton Paramedic Service in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor; and
- (c) That the Chief, Hamilton Paramedic Service, or designate, be authorized to amend any Contracts executed and any ancillary documents as required if the vendor identified in this Report undergoes a name change or if the vendor’s business regarding remote patient monitoring supplies, equipment, or technology used by the Hamilton Paramedic Service or any portion of it is sold or assigned in whole or in part to another vendor

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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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.

Hamilton Paramedic Service collaborates with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ontario Health, and the Greater Hamilton Health Network to offer preventive medical health services as part of the larger healthcare system. A key aspect of this program since 2015 has been the utilization of Future Health Services Inc.'s Remote Patient Monitoring equipment and technology to remotely monitor clients' health conditions from the comfort of their homes.

This technology allows clients to actively participate in their own healthcare while having the assurance that a trained paramedic is monitoring their vital signs for any abnormalities. This remote patient monitoring capability allows the Hamilton Paramedic Service to identify potential issues in a patient's health condition, alerts paramedics to the issue, and stimulates a discussion, visit, or further clinical assessment of the client to determine required activities. The program reduces the need for unnecessary home visits for assessments and reduces unnecessary ambulance responses and transportation to overburdened hospital emergency departments.

The remote patient monitoring technology was originally introduced in 2015 by Future Health Services Inc. and Queen's University as part of a Federal grant aimed at studying its effectiveness through implementation across multiple Ontario paramedic services. Hamilton Paramedic Service was an early adopter and participant in the research. All associated supplies, equipment, and technology costs were covered through grant funding during the research phase. Since December 2019 all associated costs have been covered through funding from the Ministry of Long-Term Care and Ontario Health. Hamilton Paramedic Service is currently utilizing the remote patient monitoring technology for over 200 clients.

**Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: The costs for remote patient monitoring technology are 100% covered by the Ministry of Long-Term Care and do not impact the municipal tax levy.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: Any future and/or renewal of agreements will be reviewed by the City Solicitor for compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations. Additionally, Information Technology and the City of Hamilton Privacy Officer will ensure controls are reviewed and in place to protect personal health information stored in the database.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

With a grant from Canada Health Infoway in 2015, Future Health Services Inc. in collaboration with Queens University and a variety of Community Paramedic Programs from across Ontario, created and evaluated ‘Community Paramedicine Remote Patient Monitoring (CPRPM): Benefits Evaluation & Lessons Learned 2015/2017’ (Brohman et al., 2018). Since remote patient monitoring was originally a research and grant funded program, there was no direct cost to the City of Hamilton, as Future Health Services Inc. provided all infrastructure (hardware and software) to Hamilton Paramedic Service starting in 2015. Following the conclusion of research funding in 2019, all costs were covered through the Ministry of Long-Term Care as well as through other grant applications through Ontario Health for COVID activities related to remote patient monitoring. This provided continuity to the clients of the program which expanded from 40 patients to approximately 200 patients.

With the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency response in late 2019 and early 2020, Hamilton Paramedic Service pivoted its responsibilities to ensure continuity of paramedic services in the community, managing the overwhelming surge in hospital patient volumes, and safety of staff. As a result, Hamilton Paramedic Service did not have adequate time and resources to secure the appropriate procurement direction on how remote patient monitoring would be provided moving forward.

In response to continued COVID-19 pressures in 2020, Ontario Health and local health authorities requested that Hamilton Paramedic Service expand its remote patient monitoring program to accommodate the early discharge of COVID-19 patients from hospitals, enabling them to be monitored from the comfort of their homes. This approach aimed to increase hospital capacity for more severe COVID-19 cases. By the end of 2021, the remote patient monitoring program had approximately 100-150 patients, encompassing individuals with COVID-19 and other chronic conditions. These costs were fully covered through a combination of Ministry of Long-Term Care Community Paramedic funding and through Ministry of Health COVID funding.

In 2021, with the continued pressures of COVID-19 on the health care system, Hamilton Paramedic Service sought and received permission from the Ministry of Long-Term Care to reallocate unused 2021 Ministry of Long-Term Care Community Paramedic funds to pre-pay Future Health Services Inc. for supplies, equipment, and technology until 2023. This approval had two benefits. First, it ensured continuity of care which many patients had relied upon both before and throughout the pandemic. Secondly, it would provide the necessary time for COVID-19 response and activities to wind-down, and for Hamilton Paramedic Service to resume normal operations and business practices. Thanks to the program's success pre-pandemic and throughout the pandemic crisis, the Hamilton Paramedic Service currently monitors around 220 patients. With the COVID-19 pandemic gradually receding, the service is now focused on resolving the initial procurement processes, which were initiated in early 2020.

By collaborating with Future Health Services Inc. and Queen's University in research endeavours, the Hamilton Paramedic Service was able to offer a valuable service to residents at no cost to the City for four years. The COVID-19 pandemic created human resource and process challenges which resulted in the non-compliance reported in Report FCS23019 (2023 First Quarter Emergency and Non-competitive Procurements Report) and Report FCS23020 (2023 First Quarter Non-compliance with the Procurement Policy Report).

This Report is submitted to establish a procurement approval consistent with the required policies while ensuring effective program continuity.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

- Personal Health Information and Protection Act, 2004
- Procurement Policy for City of Hamilton, Policy #11 – Non-Competitive Procurements

### **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

- Corporate Services – Procurement
  - Procurement specialists have reviewed and clarified information provided in the report, and support the content as now written.
- Corporate Services – Legal
  - Legal Services has reviewed this report and made minor changes, which have been captured in this version. If the report is approved, Legal will review the contract provided by the vendor, to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation continues.
- Corporate Services – Finance
  - Finance has reviewed the financials presented, and confirmed they are accurate with actuals against the program. They have further confirmed there is a funding source to support the expenses through the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

### **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- The Ministry of Long-Term Care has confirmed that the information being collected by Future Health Services Inc.'s remote patient monitoring program meets the reporting requirements for the Ministry of Long-Term Care.
- As a legacy program, clients have grown used to and are comfortable with the technology. Changes in technology, especially with older adults, can be complex for individuals to adjust to, and therefore may see a decrease in program use.

- Paramedics are trained and comfortable with installing and use of the technology and the accompanying software. New technology will require training, leading to a loss of hours spent with clients.
- If new technology were to be implemented, Hamilton Paramedic Service employees would be required to exchange one technology for another. The cost associated with this would result from staff traveling to approximately 200 locations to remove and install new hardware. This would result in lost time to staff's productivity, increased fuel costs, and the resulting carbon footprint.
- New hardware would be subject to inflation, whereas existing hardware (approximately 200 units) were procured previously under less inflationary pricing. A hardware exchange between a new and existing vendor may increase costs beyond the funding envelope provided by the Ministry of Long-Term Care.
- In addition to the remote patient monitoring abilities, a value-add feature is the patient charting function that is included with the software. Changes to this system would result in a need to re-train staff and consume time transferring data from one system to another.

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Other remote patient monitoring technology is available in the marketplace including technology from:

- Aetonix – A Division of Trudell Medical Group
- Phillips Virtual Care Management
- Vivify Health

Implementation of an alternative technology at this time would require significant effort and cost to retrain paramedics, install equipment, train existing clients, acquire new equipment and develop the required reporting in fulfilment of our grant funding obligations.

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED – N/A**

### REFERENCES

Brohman, M., Green, M., Dixon, J., Whittaker, R., Fallon, L., & Lajkosz, K. (2018). *Community Paramedicine Remote Patient Monitoring (CPRPM): Benefits Evaluation & Lessons Learned*. Canada Health Infoway. <https://www.infoway-inforoute.ca/en/component/edocman/resources/reports/benefits-evaluation/3542-community-paramedicine-remote-patient-monitoring-cprpm-benefits-evaluation-lessons-learned?Itemid=101>