

CITY OF HAMILTON

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Hamilton Paramedic Service**

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: March 25, 2013	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Dedicated Offload Nurses to Receive Ambulance Patients in Hospital Emergency Departments (CS13014) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	PREPARED BY: Brent Browett (905) 546-2424 Ext 7741
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the General Manager or designate be authorized and directed to enter into an agreement in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, to receive a grant which will fund the staffing of nurses that will be dedicated to receiving and managing the care of ambulance patients in the local hospital emergency departments to reduce the ambulance wait times, for the period of April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 or such longer or shorter period as agreed to by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.
- (b) That the General Manager or designate be authorized and directed to negotiate and enter into the necessary agreements between the City of Hamilton and Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph’s Hospital, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, to reimburse those organizations for the payment of staffing the nursing hours dedicated to receiving and managing the care of ambulance patients in the emergency departments.

- (c) That the Hamilton Paramedic Service Division be directed to utilize the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care grant to pay for all direct and supporting costs for staffing of nurses that will be dedicated to receiving and managing the care of ambulance patients in the local hospital emergency departments to reduce the ambulance wait times, for the period of April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 or such longer or shorter period agreed to by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in accordance with the terms set out in the agreement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hamilton Paramedic Service Division was invited by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to submit a business case, to support the continuation of the Paramedic Service-Hospital Dedicated Registered Nurse (RN) project, from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 or a period as agreed to by the MOHLTC. The associated grant request is in the amount of \$1,711,641 and would support dedicated offload-flow RN coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days at the three local hospital emergency departments.

The Hamilton Paramedic Service and the area emergency departments believe that the dedicated offload flow nurse program has been one of the many essential tactics to contain the Paramedic-hospital transfer of care interval. The current funding agreement for the hospital offload RN project end on March 31, 2013.

Anticipating that the MOHLTC will provide some level of grant funding, staff is seeking Council approval to continue to participate in this project pending confirmation of the MOHLTC funding for the next year and to enter into all necessary agreements.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

The MOHLTC has committed to funding 100% of approved costs to reimburse the hospitals for agreed to nursing hours and rates therefore there are no funding implications for the City.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications for the Hamilton Paramedic Service.

Legal:

The City will be required to renew or extend the agreement with the MOHLTC to receive the grant and participate in the project and also renew or extend the agreement with each participating hospital for the delivery of nursing services.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Increasing ambulance wait time intervals was first noted in Hamilton in 2003, and has continued to be one of the challenges facing the City of Hamilton while trying to maintain an appropriate emergency response time, contain the cost of the service, and address the work place hygiene of the paramedics.

In 2008, when the MOHLTC introduced dedicated ambulance offload RNs for 14 large municipalities, the City of Hamilton (City) was provided with a \$375,000 provincial grant and the authority to negotiate agreements, with local hospitals, to have dedicated nurses to receive ambulance patients at hospital emergency departments. The dedicated offload RN concept is predicated on hospital nurses having the most appropriate level of training to care for patients in the hospital setting for prolonged periods of time, and, that it is regular practice for the patient to nurse ratio to be 5 to 1 (subject to the patient condition).

The program has been renewed every year as follows:

- April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 - \$416,677
- April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 - \$788,427
- April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 the City was given an initial grant of \$788,427 and for the last four (4) months of the program an additional grant of \$173,101 was made available.
- April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013 - \$1,307,790

The current staffing of dedicated offload nurses at the three (3) local hospital emergency departments is scheduled to end on March 31, 2013 unless there are continued agreements. Given the results of the program and limited risk to the City,

staff is recommending that the City continue to participate in this project and take all necessary and reasonable steps to renew agreements with Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Hospital to maintain the dedicated nurses in the emergency departments from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 or such longer or shorter period as agreed to by the MOHLTC.

If the staff recommendations are approved, staff will undertake the following steps:

- 1) confirm and finalize an agreement renewal with the MOHLTC.
- 2) undertake to reach extended agreements with the local hospitals with the support of the Budgets & Finance and Legal Services Divisions
- 3) confirm that the hospitals have hired appropriate nursing staff
- 4) measure and adjust the program as is necessary

As well, staff continue to meet the MOHLTC and hospital officials on a regular basis analyzing the multitude of other contributing factors to the ambulance off-load issue (which is an international phenomenon), and have identified a number of other local collaborative solutions to address this matter.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Any applicable Purchasing Policies will be applied in purchasing the service from the hospitals.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Corporate Services Department, Budgets & Finance Division
Finance affirmed that the funding arrangements are acceptable to support the program.

Corporate Services Department, Risk Management Division
Risk Management representatives support participating in the program as outlined.

City Manager's Office, Human Resources Division
Human Resources, Labour Relations has no concerns with the program.

City Manager's Office, Legal Services Division
Legal Services support this report as written.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Since introducing the Paramedic-Hospital Dedicated Registered Nurse (RN) project in November 2008, the Paramedic Service has contained the Paramedic-hospital transfer of care interval relative to what it would otherwise be. While there are many variables that affect paramedic service demands, staff believes that the program has positive results and recommends continuing to participate.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The MOHLTC has not offered any alternative use for this grant funding. The City could choose not to participate in this project. However, if this option is exercised, it could be expected that the Paramedic-hospital transfer of care interval would elongate increasing the probability of a relative increase in the frequency of Code Zero Ambulance Events.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN:

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

Strategic Priority #3

Leadership & Governance

WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.

Strategic Objective

3.1 Engage in a range of inter-governmental relations (IGR) work that will advance partnerships and projects that benefit the City of Hamilton.

3.3 Improve employee engagement.

3.4 Enhance opportunities for administrative and operational efficiencies.

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

None