
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Memorandum EMS-M04-2019 Influenza Vaccine Clinics/Funding For Consideration by Council on November 25, 2019



To: Mayor Hewitt and Members of Council
From: Jason Gallagher, Manager, Emergency Services/Fire Chief

On November 5, 2019, staff were approached by the Hamilton Norfolk Haldimand Brant Emergency Services Steering Committee (HNHB ESSC). The ESSC provides leadership to the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), health service providers, and the LHIN organization in the planning and implementation of initiatives to improve service quality and wait times for emergency services. The ESSC membership includes representatives of hospital administrators, paramedic services, emergency department physicians, Critical Call and local LHINs. The HNHB LHIN has sought assistance from our Primary Care Paramedic resources in delivering 2019-2020 influenza vaccines. Local influenza vaccine programs are funded through the ESSC using funds from St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. The municipality's participation in this program would encourage access to vulnerable residents within the community. For Example:

- Medically complex seniors and other patients with a fragile health status, who are dependent on others for care or are dependent on life sustaining equipment and have limited or no family support;
- Medically complex seniors discharged from the hospital;
- Medically complex patients who require assessments and interventions to prevent readmission for acute care;
- Medically complex patients are defined as individuals suffering from chronic disease, including: cardiovascular disease including hypertension and congestive heart disease, chronic respiratory disease including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, mental illnesses including dementia, delirium, and depression.

Terms and Conditions of Funding:

1. **Funding Details:** one-time funding of \$5,910 has been approved to implement a Community Paramedicine flu shot model and provide flu shots at designated local sites twice weekly for six (6) weeks.
2. **Timeline:** funds must be spent on the initiative by March 31, 2020.
3. **Service Delivery:** administration of influenza immunization to vulnerable populations and/or residents of social housing/retirement buildings as well as provide education on influenza care, assessment and prevention.
4. **Outcome Measurement:** the following outcome measurements are to be collected and presented back to the ESSC at the June 18, 2020 meeting:
 - Number of vaccinations delivered.
 - Number of adverse reactions.
 - Number of paramedics trained.
 - How much vaccine was wasted.

Funding awarded to each project varied based on the LHIN's established criteria and evaluation. Haldimand County has obtained approval and funding for this initiative, based on the program running for a period beginning December 1, 2019 through to March 31, 2020 (the Respiratory Pathogen Season). Staff anticipate the full cost to offer this program is limited to the wages associated with seconding an existing primary care paramedic to this project twice weekly for six weeks, being the reported \$5,910; costs associated with backfilling the employee's regular wages would be offset by this funding; however, the County will be responsible for any net impact, including part-time benefit expenses for the relieving paramedic. Staff believe this cost is minimal and can be managed within the existing relief budget. If not, the variance would form a part of the overall corporate surplus or deficit.

Although the Procurement Policy 2013-02 provides for staff to accept one-time grants up to \$75,000, this is only authorized if the grant covers 100% of the costs, and does not increase staff hours. In this instance, staff would be required to seek authorization from Council prior to confirming participation in such program, given the enhanced service delivery. However, in this case, the ESSC required a response in advance of the next available Council meeting in order to meet evaluation deadlines. Unfortunately, the timelines for evaluation are quite reduced to allow sufficient time for planning, training of staff and implementation of the program after receiving the funds from the province, but with plenty of time before flu season. Based on the low risk to the County (no anticipated costs, ability to manage with current resources, etc.), staff felt it was prudent to respond immediately and secure eligibility in the program.

As funding has been confirmed, the County plans to establish a temporary Community Paramedic position specifically for this purpose. A draft job description outlining the requirements and responsibilities is attached for reference (Attachment 1). Staff have engaged in discussion with the SEIU union, covering paramedics, who have agreed to the terms and conditions of such temporary assignment that would result in a net neutral cost once provincial funding is received. In particular, a temporary Community Paramedic will be selected from the qualified and interested internal primary care paramedic pool. He/she will be placed throughout the County to administer the vaccine for the duration of the program, during which time that paramedic will be backfilled using existing resources.

Should there be difficulty in carrying out the program as planned, or should there be unexpected costs identified, staff will report back to Council as necessary.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft job description – Temporary Part-Time Community Paramedic.