
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Memorandum EMS-M01-2020 Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan Results for 2019



For Consideration by Council in Committee on March 3, 2020

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

In September 02, 2018, Council in Committee received report CMS-ES-02-2018 titled 2019 Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan, which established the ambulance response time targets for the 2019 calendar year. In accordance with the ambulance response time reporting legislation, these response time targets were submitted to the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) and made publicly accessible on their website.

The purpose of this memo is to inform Council of the 2019 ambulance response time performance plan results, which is measured against the response time targets. In regards to Response Times set out by Haldimand County Paramedic Services, staff were unable to meet the performance plan for Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS) III, (Mild Asthma, Stable Fracture), responses. This response time deficiency was less than 1%, and data shows the targeted performance plan was missed by 1 call.

The 2019 ambulance response time performance is presented as Attachment 1 to this memo. Also, staff have included Haldimand County's Response Time Performance Plan Results for the past 5 years as Attachment 2 to this memo. Determining the CTAS level is completed by measuring the acuity of a patient by using the scale system within the CTAS. The system categorizes patients by both injury and physiological findings, and ranks them by severity from 1–5 (1 being highest). In regards to severity, Sudden Cardiac Arrest and CTAS I are the highest in regards to priority. Haldimand County Paramedic Services, was able to meet the two highest levels of severity. Haldimand County Paramedic Services was not able to meet the response times for CTAS III patient's who are considered urgent, but not life threatening. Patients under this classification could be presenting with a mild asthma attack, or a stable bone fracture, that requires transport to a hospital. The inability to meet the performance plan can be attributed to increased travel times, limitations in the availability of County ambulances and equipment due to off load delays, other assignments and necessitating coverage from outside agencies.

The statistics fluctuate from year to year, due to call volume, transport times, and delay in available ambulances, which can affect the Performance Plan numbers. Ambulances in Ontario work on a seamless system when it comes to dispatching and responding to calls. There are times when Haldimand County has zero ambulances available and neighboring municipalities provide coverage for our municipality. This occurred 81 times in 2019, 66 of them occurring at night. This will increase response times. In 2019, Haldimand County Paramedic staff have noticed that, although our call volume has not increased drastically from 2018, the availability of ambulances is becoming an issue as multiple calls are being dispatched simultaneously, and therefore, affects our ability to respond. This is most significantly noticeable at night by referencing our Code "0" data (that being when units are not available). Also, ambulances are still being utilized for transfer services into the urban centres to get patients to specialized health care. This affects our resources, and often the ambulances are used to respond to emergencies in the urban centres due to Ontario's "Seamless System" model currently in place. Staff are tracking this data, to ensure they are providing the most affective deployment plan, which has been updated, specifically at night to try assist with response times. However, this is only an interim solution. Data is showing that call volumes specifically at night have increased by 45% since

2008 (and continue to rise year over year), which is affecting our response times as well as resources available to provide adequate service to the residents and visitors of Haldimand County. It is also important to know that night resources in Haldimand County have not been increased since the County took over the responsibility of Paramedic Services back in 2001. The current assessment of resources suggests that the County is very close to needing to augment its staffing resources, however, with the current uncertainty associated with Provincial directions that may change how paramedic services are provided, this decision may need to wait until this Provincial process is completed.

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