



Committee Report

To:	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	February 13, 2020
Subject / Report No:	PSR-CW-03-20
Title:	Paramedic Services Modernization Consultation
Prepared by:	Kevin McNab
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Kevin Weppler
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW42-20; Endorsed by County Council February 27, 2020 per Resolution CC30-20;

Recommendation

- 1. That Report PSR-CW-03-20 regarding the Paramedic Services Modernization Consultation be received for information.**

Executive Summary

Paramedic services comprises part of a larger emergency health services system that includes Ministry of Health (Ministry) regulators, Base Hospitals and Ministry operated ambulance communications centres known as Central Ambulance Communication Centres.

The Ministry has committed to modernizing and strengthening emergency health services to help end hallway healthcare. On October 10, 2019, the Ministry announced plans to hold consultations on Emergency Health Services and Public Health. Mr. Jim Pine was appointed to serve as special advisor to lead the Ministry's consultations.

The Ministry is requesting written submissions to respond to the discussion papers by March 31, 2020 and is scheduling in-person visits to communities across the province on how best to deliver and plan programs and services.

The modernization discussion paper and comments from Ministry leadership indicate status quo regarding municipalities remaining as valued partners in paramedic service delivery, and that the Ministry will not be privatizing paramedic service delivery or outsourcing delivery to other not-for-profits partners.

Grey County Paramedic Services (GCPS) delivers efficient and effective service while managing increasing call volumes and maintaining response time targets. As a result, GCPS is

able to provide valuable insight on the innovations that the service has put into place to help address the system pressures.

Background and Discussion

Paramedic services comprises part of a larger emergency health services system that includes Ministry of Health (Ministry) regulators, Base Hospitals and Ministry operated ambulance communications centres known as Central Ambulance Communication Centres (CACCs). In 2001, the Ministry transferred responsibility for local paramedic services to upper and single tier municipalities. Initially, the County of Grey contracted the service to the City of Owen Sound Fire Department and in 2004 began to operate the paramedic service directly.

Ontario's emergency health services system has faced pressures of rapidly increasing call volumes, performance challenges at Ministry operated CACCs and constraints in hospital emergency departments. These pressures and the impact they have had on local paramedic service delivery have been well documented through Ministry commissioned reports, the Office of the Auditor General and by the sector, including the following:

- [Auditor General Annual Report \(2013\)](#)
- [Provincial-Municipal Land Ambulance Dispatch Working Group \(2015\)](#)
- [Review of the Ontario Ambulance Communications Delivery Model \(Commissioned by the Ministry and completed by Deloitte, 2017\)](#)

The Ministry has committed to modernizing and strengthening emergency health services to help end hallway healthcare. On October 10, 2019, the Ministry announced plans to hold consultations on Emergency Health Services and Public Health. Mr. Jim Pine was appointed to serve as special advisor to lead the Ministry's consultations.

On November 18, 2019, the Ministry released two discussion papers on the modernization of Emergency Health Services and Public Health that set the context and scope for the consultation process. A copy of the Emergency Health Services discussion paper can be found in Appendix I.

The Ministry is requesting written submissions to respond to the discussion papers by March 31, 2020 and is scheduling in-person visits to communities across the province on how best to deliver and plan programs and services. In-person visits led by Mr. Pine are underway and will conclude by early Spring 2020. Recommendations based upon findings in the consultations will be provided to the Ministry but there will not be a final report.

The City of London hosted an in-person consultation on January 16, 2020 and the County of Grey CAO Kim Wingrove and Chief of Paramedic Services, Kevin McNab attended the event.

The Emergency Health Services discussion paper highlights existing evidence regarding system challenges identified by the Auditor General and Land Ambulance Dispatch Working Group, and has invited input on questions relating to the following themes:

- Outdated dispatch technologies
- Lengthy ambulance offload times and delays in transporting medically stable patients
- Lack of coordination among emergency health services partners
- Need for innovative models that improve care
- Health equity regarding access to services across regions and communities (i.e. rural and indigenous communities)

It is important to note that the discussion paper and comments from Ministry leadership indicate status quo regarding municipalities remaining as valued partners in paramedic service delivery, and that the Ministry will not be privatizing paramedic service delivery or outsourcing delivery to other not-for-profits partners. The discussion paper also does not refer to previous communication about the possibility of consolidating CACCs or efforts to better integrate paramedic services and CACCs.

Grey County Paramedic Service (GCPS) delivers efficient and effective service while managing increasing call volumes and maintaining response time targets. As a result, GCPS is able to provide valuable insight on the innovations that the service has put into place to help address the system pressures (i.e. Community Paramedicine Program, Enotification sharing of information, Mental Health Urgent Response Team Notification, Vulnerable Patient Identification, Referral to 211 for Social Economic Support, Various Community Working Groups (Drug and Alcohol, Opioid, etc.)). GCPS has responded to the Ministry's request for comment and continues to advocate for improved dispatch technologies, strategies to mitigate Paramedic offload delay, and new Models of Care for Paramedics. Appendix II includes Grey County Paramedic Services responses to the Ministry's questions.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Ambulance Act, Regulation 257/00

Financial and Resource Implications

Relevant Consultation

External:

Internal: CAO, Finance

Appendices and Attachments

Appendix 1 – [Discussion Paper EHS Modernization](#)

Appendix 2 – [Grey Responses to EHS Modernization](#)