

The Honourable David Lametti  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
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December 4, 2020

Dear Minister Lametti,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the vital importance of our frontline heroes in safeguarding public health and safety, including paramedics. However, I am writing to bring to your attention longstanding incidence of violence against paramedics perpetrated by patients and bystanders. Abuses include verbal abuse, harassment, threats, intimidation and physical assaults on a regular basis.

As with all Canadian workers, paramedics have the right to carry out their work duties free of harassment and violence.

To this end, Region of Peel Council passed the attached resolution, and accompanying report on November 12, 2020, entitled “Eliminating Violence Against Paramedics – A Call to Action”, calling for amendments to the Criminal Code that provide protections for paramedics. Such amendments would ensure that acts and threats of violence against on-duty paramedics are treated as an indictable criminal offence, consistent with sentencing for acts of violence against peace officers.

The consequences of chronic exposure to workplace violence are significant, including long-term physical, psychological and emotional harm. Because the problem is so pervasive and is often perpetrated by people for whom criminal prosecution is unlikely, there is a perception of tacit institutional acceptance of violence as a normal, unpreventable part of paramedic work.

Operating one of the largest paramedic services in Ontario, the Region of Peel has taken a proactive approach in advancing prevention of paramedic violence. Regional Council is supportive of the following additional local measures:

- Collaboration between Human Resources and Paramedic Services to address the organizational culture that normalizes external workplace violence
- Improvements to the method of reporting all incidents of threats and intimidation, assault, sexual harassment experienced by Peel Paramedics

**Nando Iannicca**  
Regional Chair & CEO

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- Ongoing progress implementing the Canadian Standards Association Group's Psychological Health and Safety Standard
- Working with Peel Regional Police and the Mississauga Central Ambulance Communication Centre to support a structured, collaborative approach to problem-solving operational issues and ongoing assessment of the status of violence prevention efforts
- A zero-tolerance public awareness campaign to address external violence against paramedics

Our vision for Peel is a *Community for Life* and paramedics, and the vital service they provide, play an important role in the realization of this plan. Efforts to support them are making a difference, but there is more work to do. Amendments to the Federal Criminal Code will help to protect our paramedics and will also convey the value that Canadians place on paramedics' health and safety.

We look forward to ongoing collaboration between our respective levels of government to ensure the continuation of this positive momentum to eliminate external violence against paramedics. I would welcome an opportunity to discuss with you and your office on how we can work together to implement the necessary changes to address this very important issue.

Kindest personal regards,



Nando Iannicca  
Regional Chair & Chief Executive Officer  
Region of Peel

CC: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
Hon. Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General  
Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health  
Peel MPs and MPPs  
Single and upper-tier municipalities responsible for land ambulance

Attached: Resolution 2020-919  
Eliminating Violence Against Paramedics – A Call to Action,  
November 12, 2020