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AMBULANCE SERVICE REVIEW EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BRANCH

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, February 12, 2004, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee and Regional Council receive the Executive Summary of the Ambulance Service Review Report from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Emergency Health Services Branch (MOHLTC-EHS). The report highlights the findings and recommendations of the recent certification review for York Region Emergency Medical Services (*see Attachment 1*).
2. Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee and Regional Council receive the three-year certification awarded to York Region Emergency Medical Services from the MOHLTC-EHS (*see Attachment 2*).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee and Regional Council with information relative to York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) compliance with applicable provincial legislation and standards.

3. BACKGROUND

Regional Council, through the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee, has the legislated responsibility to ensure that York Region EMS is providing ambulance services in accordance with the *Ambulance Act* and the regulations thereto and in accordance with standards published by the MOHLTC-EHS.

On January 1, 2000 land ambulance services became the responsibility of the upper tier municipalities in Ontario. The *Ambulance Act* was amended to reflect this change and to renew the responsibility of the MOHLTC to monitor and evaluate the delivery of ambulance services to ensure compliance with the legislation and the standards.

This full service comprehensive review is conducted every three years. York Region EMS last underwent an Ambulance Service Review in September 2000. All operators who meet the requirements receive a certificate to operate for a further three years. To

continue to provide service, the operator must participate in another review before the expiration of its certificate.

The Ambulance Service Review was developed and implemented in 1994 by the MOHLTC, in consultation with ambulance service operators. The review program is a peer orientated, quality based process that assesses the success of each operator in meeting the requirements of the *Ambulance Act* and its regulations and the standards issued by the MOHLTC-EHS when providing ambulance services.

During the course of the Ambulance Service Review, a number of areas were addressed, including:

- Level and Type of Ambulance Service Provided
- Employee Qualifications & Documentation
- Staffing & Training
- Vehicles
- Service Review Program
- Patient Care
- Documentation and Security of Patient Care Information
- Patient Care Equipment & Supplies
- Policies and Procedures
- Operations
- Communication
- Facilities and Accommodations

The Ambulance Service Review program does not evaluate the financial management or operational management of ambulance services except where there is a direct link to the provision of patient care.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 2003 Service Review

The Ambulance Service Review was conducted on September 16, 17 and 18, 2003. Ambulance Service Review Teams utilized a number of activities and processes to evaluate York Region EMS:

- a) Interviews: Interviews with EMS management and paramedic staff were conducted, as well as with hospital emergency unit staff, base hospital staff, and Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) staff.
- b) Documentation Review: Patient care, staff qualification and operational files pertinent to the delivery of ambulance service were reviewed including: policies and procedures, incident reports, ambulance call reports, vehicle and equipment maintenance records, staff training records and other relevant standard documents.
- c) Surveys: Pre-visit surveys were sent to Paramedics, CACCs, Base Hospital, and York Region Hospitals. These surveys were distributed to the targeted groups and returned to the MOHLTC-EHS.
- d) Ride-outs: Team members conducted ride-outs with paramedics. Observations of the team members were documented to evaluate whether the care provided is consistent with the patient care standards.

- e) Observation and Examination: Various hands-on examinations of vehicles, equipment and documents were conducted to accurately determine compliance with legislation and standards.
- f) Exit Interview: Upon completion of the Ambulance Service Review site visit, the Team Leader and designated team members met with EMS management to provide a brief verbal overview of the findings of the review visit. This meeting provided an opportunity for York Region EMS to be informed of any areas of patient care or public safety deficiency that required prompt attention. The meeting also served to give York Region EMS an early indication of its success in meeting the requirements of the review.

4.1.1 2003 Service Review Award

Based on the Ambulance Service Review findings, York Region EMS was awarded a three-year certification standing. In determining the award level, MOHLTC-EHS recognized that all essential services and programs demonstrated a high level of compliance with the *Ambulance Act* and its regulations and the standards published by the MOHLTC-EHS.

4.1.2 2003 Service Review Highlights

The Service Review Team observed that York Region EMS was a large ambulance service that has made great strides since its inception in 2000 and has become an industry leader. York Region EMS either met or exceeded the standards set by the MOHLTC and for this it was commended.

The report found that York Region EMS was extremely dedicated to achieving excellence and was commended for its hard work and efforts in the following areas:

- Excellent working relationship with CACC and Base Hospital
- Patient care was rated by the emergency departments as very good to excellent
- Detailed auditing system for Ambulance Call Reports (ACRs) and Incident Reports
- Proactive effort towards training and education in the service
- Above average involvement with allied agencies
- Crews excellent communication skills with patients and families

Six recommendations were made concerning the operation of York Region EMS. Four of these recommendations have been addressed by York Region EMS. The other two recommendations require a response in writing to the MOHLTC-EHS, providing comments, a plan and a timetable for implementing the recommendations. The recommendations were:

- Ambulance Call Reports (ACRs) must be completed according to the Documentation Review
- Ambulances and Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) must be stocked with the required number of supplies

A detailed report has been forwarded to the MOHLTC-EHS outlining York Region EMS' response to these recommendations (*see Attachment 3*). Quality assurance processes already implemented will ensure compliance with the recommendations.

4.2 Relationship to Vision 2026

York Region EMS supports the Vision 2026 goals of “Responding to the Needs of Our Residents” and “Supporting a safe, caring and healthy community” by continuing to provide and support high quality, co-ordinated emergency services to all local municipalities and residents of York Region. The MOHLTC-EHS confirmed the high level of service provided by awarding York Region EMS a three-year certification standing.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Having met the requirements of the Ambulance Service Review, the MOHLTC-EHS has issued a certificate to York Region EMS to operate an ambulance service, thereby agreeing to provide the necessary funding grants for the next three years.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Ambulance Service Review and certification award to York Region EMS provides confirmation that The Regional Municipality of York is continuing to deliver high quality Emergency Medical Services for the residents of all local municipalities within York Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The Ambulance Services Review evaluates the success of the York Region EMS service in meeting the requirements of the *Ambulance Act* and its regulations and the standards published by the MOHLTC-EHS and ensures that the quality of patient care and public safety is maintained. Overall, the MOHLTC-EHS congratulated the staff and management of York Region EMS on their commitment to providing quality ambulance service.

The three-year certification standing award to York Region EMS confirms that all essential services and programs delivered to the public demonstrates a high level of compliance with the legislated regulations and standards.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing has been forwarded to each Member of Council with the March 4, 2004 Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee agenda and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)