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**PURCHASE OF MEDICATIONS AND LINEN SERVICES FOR
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated February 18, 2011, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Region enter into separate agreements with Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Central Hospital, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of medications and medical devices used by Emergency Medical Services, together totalling \$532,456 for a three-year period.
2. The Region enter into separate agreements with Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Central Hospital, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of linen and laundry services used by Emergency Medical Services, together totalling \$401,946 for a three-year period.
3. The Commissioner of Community and Health Services be authorized to enter into these agreements.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek authorization to enter into sole source contracts with Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Central Hospital, and Markham Stouffville Hospital for the purchase of medications, medical devices, and linen and laundry services required by York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Although the Region's current contracts for these services will only expire at the end of October, 2011, current expenditures will exceed previously approved contract amounts by the end of the first quarter. Staff is requesting the approval of new contracts with the identified providers, rather than seeking an interim contract value increase followed by a contract renewal request in the fall.

3. BACKGROUND

Medications and medical devices (i.e. intravenous sets) are required by EMS for patient care

In the performance of their duties under the *Ambulance Act*, paramedics administer numerous medications and perform medical acts under the authority of the base hospital Medical Director appointed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Medications, medical devices, and their use are governed by the Canadian *Food and Drugs Act* and the Ontario *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

Procurement, storage, and tracking of these items is complex and is tightly managed on a larger scale by hospitals. Regional hospitals have extended their expertise and economies of scale with these items to the Region's EMS Branch. Utilizing regional hospital resources allows EMS to efficiently maintain the required medication supply levels on an immediate and as needed basis. The EMS Branch has been purchasing medications from regional hospitals since 2000.

Clause No. 7 of Report No. 7, *Purchase of Medications and Linen Services for Emergency Medical Services*, of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee was adopted without amendment by Council at its meeting on October 23, 2008.

Appropriate management of linen and laundry services ensures the prevention of cross contamination of patients

EMS requires linen and laundry services to ensure each patient is provided with clean, fresh linen (i.e. sheets, blankets, pillow cases, etc.). Linen must be properly laundered to ensure there is no cross contamination from patient to patient. In addition, linen must be restocked on a timely basis to ensure service efficiency is maintained.

Hospitals manage their linen and laundry services on a large scale through a mixture of in-house and contracted services. Regional hospitals have extended their expertise and economies of scale with these services to the Region's EMS Branch. Immediately after transferring patients, paramedics have access to dispose of soiled laundry and acquire fresh linens prior to returning to service without delay. EMS has been purchasing linen and laundry services from regional hospitals since 2000.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

As public institutions, hospitals have high accountability, standards and safeguards to ensure quality service is delivered. All three regional hospitals (Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Central Hospital, and Markham Stouffville Hospital) are accredited

by Accreditation Canada. All three regional hospitals are members of buying groups and complete competitive bidding processes that satisfy York Region's competitive Purchasing By-law. The provision of these services by hospitals continues to meet the operational requirements of EMS.

York Region hospitals provide pharmacy and linen and laundry services to EMS

Each hospital has a pharmacy, staffed with dedicated pharmacists, that is responsible to procure, control, track and dispense medications manufactured by various pharmaceutical companies. EMS needs these functions, but on a much smaller scale. To duplicate this level of expertise within the Region for EMS would be costly.

Linen and laundry service is a key component of the EMS supply chain. Every patient transported by EMS receives clean, fresh linen. Linen must be properly laundered to ensure there is no cross contamination of patients. In health care, laundering linens properly and safely is a special task. Often linens are contaminated with bodily fluids; housekeeping staff must have proper training and proper facilities for the job. Regional hospitals handle this job on a large scale and use their buying power to provide cost-efficient service. Partnering with our public hospital colleagues within the Region allows EMS to leverage this synergy.

Entering into supply contracts for linen with regional hospitals is the preferred option as it leverages existing supply, distribution, collection and cleaning processes without duplicating parallel services

Maintaining contracts with the three regional hospitals is the preferred supply option for EMS as this negates additional costs to maintain infrastructure to distribute and recapture both clean and soiled linen separate from the hospital system. Many EMS providers in the province are required to source linen supply services separate from hospital services and incur higher associated costs.

If York Region hospitals did not provide contracted linen services to EMS, a separate linen system would need to be put into place. This would require the purchase of linen and separate laundry hampers in hospitals. Additional costs would be incurred to have linen delivered and collected. Paramedics would be required to retrieve linen from under patients after transferring them from the ambulance stretcher and placed into EMS specific laundry hampers. When used linen is handled by paramedics at locations away from regional hospitals, the linen would need to be transferred in EMS vehicles for later collection. Containing used linen in EMS vehicles is problematic due to space constraints and infection control requirements. Partnering with our public hospital colleagues within the Region allows EMS to leverage these synergies.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Current contracts with the regional hospitals for the supply of medications and linen services will expire on October 31, 2011. However, expenditures for these products and services are expected to exceed the approved contract levels by the end of the first quarter due to higher uses of medications and linen than was predicted at the contract commencement in 2008. Rather than seeking approval to extend the approved contract amounts necessary to October 31, 2011 where projected costs will be \$225,000 for the purchase of medications and linen services combined, and then seek approval for subsequent contract renewals, staff is requesting the approval to establish new contracts with the required contract amounts.

Funding for these supplies and services is available within the department's approved budget. The total cost of medications and medical devices for the next three years is estimated at \$532,456. The total cost of linen and laundry services is estimated at \$401,946. These costs are based on current consumption. No unit price increase is anticipated.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

There are no local municipal implications associated with this report.

7. CONCLUSION

Regional hospitals have the expertise and the economies of scale to provide these services to the Region's EMS Branch. Regional hospitals are accountable institutions funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and governed by Ontario's *Public Hospitals Act*. The products and services supplied by regional hospitals continue to meet the operational requirements of EMS.

It is recommended that York Region enter into the sole source contracts as outlined in this report.

For more information on this report, please contact Norm Barrette, Chief/General Manager at Ext. 4709.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.