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CBRN CONFERENCE 2005 - UPDATE

The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, May 2, 2005, from the Commissioner of Health Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Committee and Council receive this report regarding the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Conference 2005 for information.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee and Council with an update regarding the CBRN conference hosted by York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in February 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 20, 2005, Council approved the request from the Emergency Medical Services Branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to host a CBRN conference in York Region (Clause No. 1 of Report No. 1 of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee). On February 23 and 24, 2005 York Region EMS hosted the *CBRN: The Initial Hours* Conference at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill. A CBRN event is an emergency resulting from chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear hazards.

In the spirit of working together, York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge, Regional Fire Coordinator John Molyneaux (Fire Chief of Central York Fire Services) and General Manager, Emergency Medical Services, Brad Meekin sent a co-signed invitation to all EMS, Police, Fire and Public Health senior staff across the province to attend this important event.

Over 350 EMS, Police, Fire and Public Health leaders from across Ontario came together to discuss a planned and coordinated response to a CBRN incident, and to actively participate in a valuable opportunity to network and share information with colleagues. The main objective was to bring together first responders from across the province to discuss common concerns and practices associated with response to a CBRN event.

This was the first time the MOHLTC Emergency Health Services Branch had requested an EMS provider to host a conference of this magnitude and was the first event of its kind to take place in the Province of Ontario.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Hosting the 2005 CBRN Conference provided York Region EMS with an opportunity to profile The Regional Municipality of York and the innovative work of the Health Services Department in recent CBRN events.

4.1 Conference Objectives

The specific objectives of this educational event were:

- Bring together senior leaders within the first responder community
- Provide a program that is timely and topical
- Provide a venue for enhanced local community and regional relations
- Address leading issues through keynote presentations
- Provide a venue for local economic development

4.2 Conference Highlights

The Conference was a great success and highlights included:

- Official opening ceremonies by a tri-service color guard, comprised of police, fire, and EMS representatives, and dignitaries
- Internationally recognized opening keynote speaker, retired Major General Lewis Mackenzie
- A national perspective on CBRN events in Canada from Staff Sergeant John Bureaux, RCMP
- Other key speakers and concurrent breakout sessions
- Panel discussions
- Exhibitors
- Decontamination demonstration
- Mobile unit tours

4.3 Feedback and Evaluation

Conference attendees provided positive feedback with regard to bringing together fire, police, EMS and Public Health personnel for this conference. Participants commented that they went away with a better respect and understanding of each service's needs. The conference also reinforced to many attendees the need to actively participate in a unified command to be successful in their approach to a CBRN event.

4.4 Recognition by the MOHLTC

On April 5, 2005 the Director, Emergency Health Services Branch of the MOHLTC and MOHLTC staff presented a recognition plaque to York Region EMS in appreciation of the public safety leadership role undertaken in hosting a CBRN conference in York Region (*see Attachment 1*).

To produce a conference of this magnitude, quality and specialty was a huge accomplishment. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Conference Planning Committee, including representatives from York Region Health Services (both EMS and Public Health Branches) and York Regional Police.

4.5 Relationship to Vision 2026

The information contained in this report contributes to the Vision 2026 goals of “Engaged Communities and a Responsive Region” and “Responding to the needs of our Residents”. Promoting safe and secure communities and continuing to provide and support high quality emergency services is achieved through fostering effective relationships between EMS and community agencies and organizations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The two-day conference budget was \$125,000 and the total amount was 100% funded by the MOHLTC, Emergency Health Services Branch. Costs associated with Health Services staff time for planning and delivery of the conference were accommodated within the approved 2005 Business Plan and Budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

This conference is the first CBRN conference hosted by a municipal EMS provider in the Province of Ontario. Knowledge that was gained from this conference will further enhance the ability of all responders in York Region (EMS, police, fire, public health and local hospitals) to respond to CBRN events.

7. CONCLUSION

York Region EMS was honored with the opportunity to host *CBRN: The Initial Hours* Conference 2005. The conference was a great success, providing the opportunity for community first response leaders from across the Province to learn, develop and discuss common concerns and practices associated with a response to a CBRN event. Excellent keynote speakers and concurrent sessions communicated the key message of coordinating a unified response when planning for and responding to a CBRN incident.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included with the Agenda for the June 2, 2005 Committee meeting)