

3

DEDICATED OFF-LOAD NURSING PROJECT CONTINUATION

The Community and Health Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated May 18, 2010, from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council approve the receipt and expenditure of up to \$788,427 for the fiscal year 2010/2011 (ending March 31, 2011) to be disbursed to York Region hospitals to secure dedicated emergency room nurses aimed at reducing Emergency Medical Services off-load delays.
2. Council authorize the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to enter into Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and York Region hospitals with respect to the receipt and disbursement of the funding.
3. Council authorize the Commissioner of Community and Health Services to enter into future Memoranda of Understanding with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and York Region hospitals related to the receipt and disbursement of funding for dedicated emergency room nurses to alleviate Emergency Medical Services off-load delays.
4. The Regional Chair send a letter of thanks to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for the continuation of the program and the substantial increase in funding.

2. PURPOSE

This report seeks Council approval for the receipt and expenditure of \$788,427 from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the Ministry) for dedicated emergency room nurses to help address Emergency Medical Services (EMS) off-load delays. This is the third year that funding has been provided to the Region for this purpose.

This report also seeks Council approval to enter into the necessary Memoranda of Understanding to implement the continuation of this project to reduce EMS off-load delays.

3. BACKGROUND

EMS off-load delays reduce the number of paramedic ambulances available for timely responses in the Region

In May of 2008, the Ministry began an initiative to reduce off-load time delays EMS paramedics experience when transferring patients to the care of hospital staff. Funding was provided to selected municipalities and area hospitals to hire dedicated nurses to receive ambulance patients in hospital emergency rooms. This project was one of several initiatives announced by the Ministry to improve emergency department wait times. Currently, the average off-load times range between 75 to 100 minutes at the three regional hospitals.

Since November 2008, individual agreements for this initiative have been in place between the Region and Southlake Regional Health Centre, Markham Stouffville Hospital and York Central Hospital. In 2009, the Province provided the Region with one-time funding in the amount of \$416, 667 for the 2009/2010 fiscal year.

Project funding increases by nearly 90% from the previous year's level

On March 26, 2010, the Ministry notified the Region that the Province will be providing \$788, 427 to disburse to local hospitals, thereby increasing the funding by nearly 90% from the previous year. With Council approval, the Region will enter into agreements for the dedicated nursing project at local hospitals for the fiscal year 2010/2011.

The Region has tied capital funding of hospitals to off-load delay targets

On October 22, 2009, Regional Council adopted Clause No. 13 of Report No. 7 of the Finance and Administration Committee - *Approval to Execute the Memorandum of Understanding for Capital Funding of Hospitals*. The provision of capital funding is subject to each hospital showing bona fide efforts to progressive improvements in EMS off-load delays; reducing the annual average delays, which currently range from 75 – 100 minutes, to 30 minutes by 2014. In the event EMS off-load delay targets are not achieved, and bona fide efforts are not satisfactorily proven, York Region can reduce funding in the amount of the additional operating costs incurred by York Region EMS. To this end, York Region EMS and Emergency Room Management from each of the hospitals have committed to working collaboratively to achieve the EMS off-load delay targets set out in the memoranda of understanding.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

An average of 16 ambulance unit hours are freed each day as a result of the dedicated nursing project

Data collected since the inception of the project in November 2008 continues to demonstrate that dedicated nursing staff receiving and managing ambulance-only patients is effective in quickly returning EMS resources back to the community. Other GTA municipalities were polled for their performance data to provide a comparative analysis. Table 1 outlines the results from three GTA participating municipalities.

Table 1
GTA Comparator Analysis of Project Outcomes

Municipality	Number of Participating Hospitals	Average EMS Unit Hours Returned Per Day
York Region	3	16
Toronto	10	93
Peel Region	3	30
Halton Region	1	3

As a result of the increased funding in the 2010/2011 allocation, EMS anticipates recovering an additional 13 ambulance unit hours per day. Table 2 outlines each hospital's dedicated nursing hours, the daily average ambulance unit hours returned by each respective hospital and the anticipated 2010 levels.

Table 2
Comparison of Dedicated Nursing Hours and
Average Ambulance Hours Returned

Hospital	2009 Weekly Nursing Hours	2009 Average Ambulance Unit Hour Returned/Day	2010 Weekly Nursing Hours	2010 Anticipated Average Ambulance Unit Hour Returned/Day
Southlake	84	8.0	140	14
York Central	84	7.0	140	14
Markham-Stouffville	40	0.6	40	1
Total	208	15.6	320	29

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2010 approved budget included expenditures and funding consistent with the 2009/2010 level of \$416,700. The Ministry has confirmed the funding will increase by \$371,727 in 2010/2011.

Based on the anticipated ambulance unit hours returned in the 2010/2011 term, the equivalent value of \$1.9 million dollars of service time is expected to be recovered. This equates to more than doubling the return on the funding.

The cost of this project continues to be 100% funded by the Province resulting in no additional financial implications to York Region. The approved funding is for the 2010/2011 fiscal year (ending March 31, 2011).

The Region will provide funding to area hospitals in accordance with the Memoranda of Understanding and the hospitals will provide necessary data in order for the Region and the Ministry to monitor the effectiveness of this project.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Off-load delays are still experienced at all three York Region hospital emergency departments, but to a lesser extent due to the implementation of the dedicated nursing project. Reducing EMS off-load delays increases the availability of paramedics to respond to community needs.

7. CONCLUSION

The Ministry is providing York Region with 100% provincial funding to continue the dedicated off-load nursing project. This project permits York Region hospitals to secure dedicated nurses to accept EMS patients to reduce off-load delays in their emergency departments. The ongoing evaluation reveals ambulance unit hours are freed each day as a result of the project, thereby improving the availability of EMS resources in the Region.

For more information on this report, please contact Norm Barrette, General Manager, Emergency Medical Services, at extension 4709.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.