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### **COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON THE EXPLORATION OF A YORK REGION EMS SPECIAL OPERATIONS/TACTICAL PARAMEDIC PROGRAM**

**The Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee recommends that:**

- 1. Regional Council support the implementation of a York Region EMS Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic Program in 2005**
- 2. The cost for safety equipment required for a York Region EMS Special Operations/Tactical Program be cost shared 50/50 with York Regional Police conditional on the approval of the 2005 budget**
- 3. All costs for the implementation of this program be included for consideration in the 2005 budget**
- 4. This report be forwarded to the York Regional Police Services Board for review and comment.**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

1. The cost for safety equipment required for a York Region EMS Special Operations/Tactical Program be cost shared 50/50 with York Regional Police conditional on the approval of the 2005 budget.
2. This report be forwarded to the York Regional Police Services Board for review and comment.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide a more detailed analysis of Report No. 5 of the Health and Emergency Medical Services Committee entitled Exploration of York Region EMS Special Operations/Tactical Paramedics Program presented to Regional Council on June 10, 2004. This report will detail the additional resources required to potentially provide a York Region EMS Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic Program in partnership with York Regional Police.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

The service delivery mandate for York Region EMS is to provide land ambulance transport of the sick and injured. The provision of service by York Region EMS encompasses many diverse environments and situations that require specialized medical response and transport options.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

Currently, York Region EMS provides on-scene medical support to York Regional Police during high risk incidents. York Region EMS staff remain on standby well outside the incident area and are not allowed within the perimeter of a Police emergency. With an EMS Special Operations/Tactical program in place, EMS staff would be able to provide medical coverage to tactical police officers and citizens during emergencies and to tactical police officers during training exercises. In today's environment, tactical police officers are presented with more divergent and evasive situations involving guns and weapons. Specialized paramedic coverage would provide health and safety benefits to tactical police officers when engaged in these high risk situations.

### **4.1 Other Tactical Paramedic Programs**

Tactical paramedic programs have been established in large scale urban centers in support of police organizations throughout North America.

#### **4.1.1 City of Toronto**

In Ontario, Toronto EMS has developed and implemented a tactical and special services program since 1998 in support of the Toronto Police Service and the Ontario Provincial Police. Toronto EMS has trained 16 paramedics who are deployed from regular operations. They responded to 406 incident requests from Toronto Police Services in 2003.

#### **4.1.2 City of Ottawa**

In 2001 a Coroners' Inquest reviewed a hostage taking incident at OC Transpo in the City of Ottawa, April 1999. The jury made three recommendations with reference to the development, implementation and ongoing training of tactical paramedics and establishing operational protocols with police (*see Attachment 1*).

In the City of Ottawa, 12 paramedics are trained. They respond from regular operational assignments as needed. In 2003, Ottawa tactical paramedics responded to over 200 incident requests.

#### **4.1.3 Regional Municipality of Niagara**

The Regional Municipality of Niagara has temporarily suspended their program as they are currently assuming direct control of fleet and dispatch EMS operations. They anticipate deploying paramedics from regular assigned duties as requested by local police authorities.

#### **4.1.4 Regional Municipality of Halton**

The Regional Municipality of Halton implemented a paramedic program to support Police Tactical Response units. Ten tactical paramedics have been trained and respond from regular operational assignments. In 2003, Halton tactical paramedics responded to 50 incident requests.

EMS staff are not aware of any other services providing this type of program in the Greater Toronto Area.

#### **4.2 Proposed York Region Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic Program**

The primary objective of a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program would be to provide emergency medical care to citizens and/or police officers injured or ill during high-risk incidents. Paramedics from York Region EMS would be incorporated into the York Regional Police Search and Rescue, Public Order and Emergency Response Units. Initial and ongoing training would be conducted by York Regional Police and would include tactical scene management and team integration.

#### **4.3 Proposed Deployment Activation**

During training and tactical operations, tactical paramedics would operate under the direction of the York Regional Police Tactical Team Supervisor. Within their scope of practice, tactical paramedics would maintain authority over all medical procedures that are performed. Tactical paramedics are to be activated at the judgment of the York Regional Police. Activation would be considered in the following situations:

- Barricaded suspects
- Hostage situations
- Active shooters/rapid deployment
- Emotionally disturbed persons
- High risk warrant execution
- Explosive Disposal Unit operations
- Prescheduled training operations (when feasible due to operational demands)

Based on 2003 data provided by York Regional Police, at least 113 calls required a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic response. A further breakdown of the 2003 call types is as follows:

- Barricaded suspects: 12 calls
- Emotionally disturbed patients: 42 calls
- High risk warrant execution: 29 calls
- Explosive disposal unit operations: 30 calls

At the beginning of each shift tactical paramedics would log on with Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) and notify them that they are a tactical paramedic. The tactical paramedics would also log on with York Regional Police.

York Regional Police would request the deployment of tactical paramedics working in operations through the EMS on-duty Operations Supervisor. The Operations Supervisor would forward the request to the CACC to deploy the tactical paramedic to the police incident command post. Once at the command post, the tactical paramedics would receive an operational briefing and obtain all needed information.

Tactical paramedics would only move inside the “inner” perimeter with an escort by York Regional Police. The placement of tactical paramedics inside the perimeter is at the

discretion of the Emergency Response Unit commander. The tactical paramedics shall remain in an area of cover until the completion of the tactical operation.

If determined that a tactical paramedic is required within the “inner” perimeter, he/she would assess all injured personnel encountered. Whenever possible, the injured person(s) is to be evacuated to the designated “safe area” for treatment by the tactical paramedics.

Upon completion of a medical assessment of the injured person, the tactical paramedics would update the Emergency Response Unit commander and a decision would be made regarding evacuation. This evacuation would only be conducted if, in the opinion of the York Regional Police, it can be done safely. If a tactical paramedic evacuates the injured party, an Emergency Response Unit officer would accompany them.

Paramedic staff would provide preventative health training such as encouraging hydration and appropriate nutritional intake, as well as health status monitoring of tactical police officers engaged in high-risk training or actual high risk situations. Health status monitoring includes vital signs monitoring and/or care for any predisposed medical issues.

In the event of multiple patients, the tactical paramedic would be responsible for triage, as well as to advise CACC of the number of paramedic units required, access, directions to the patients and the types of injuries to be expected.

#### **4.3.1 Potential Outcomes**

In North America, tactical EMS has been recognized as being a best practice model for responding to high risk incidents. There are no expected impacts on liability, however, the potential benefits of a tactical EMS program include:

- Medical assistance to trauma patients in a timely fashion, affording a greater change of survival
- Pain management
- Liaising with Incident Command
- Reinforcing a unified command response
- Health and safety for all personnel

#### **4.4 Proposed Training**

Due to the unique demands of the tactical environment, tactical paramedics must have the requisite skills to address the medical situation while being able to initiate a partnership with the York Regional Police Emergency Response Unit members. Recognizing this need, interagency training is a primary objective for achieving a safe, timely and effective resolution to any tactical situation. It is important that the tactical paramedics become an integrated member of the team, fostering an understanding of the tactical operations “environment” while being able to plan the details of medical support.

The tactical paramedics would train with the Emergency Response Unit whenever training is scheduled as a means to build the “team”, ongoing education and training with equipment, and policy and procedures of the team.

EMS staff has researched the costs to train a police officer to an equivalent level of medical expertise. These costs are approximately \$300,000 per officer; however, the issue of continuing medical education and training for the purposes of maintaining paramedic certification would create significant operational challenges for police and add significantly to the operating costs of the police program. In the event that York Regional Police have officers who have paramedic training backgrounds, it is unlikely that they would be able to maintain the required level of paramedic training (144 hours per year) to provide tactical paramedic support.

#### **4.5 Supportive Organizations**

The Chief of Police and York Regional Police Senior Command support York Region EMS staff in the development, implementation and ongoing training initiatives of a tactical paramedic program in partnership with York Regional Police.

The York Region Base Hospital program endorses the concept of the development of a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program.

The attached letter indicates that CUPE 905 supports the concept of a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program in York Region (*see Attachment 2*).

#### **4.6 Legal Issues**

A Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program would result in paramedics being exposed to high risk situations due to the perilous circumstances in which a paramedic is called upon to provide care, which may increase the number and gravity of injuries sustained by paramedics.

However, there are a number of ambulance calls currently responded to by paramedics that may be inherently dangerous, for example, on a call to respond to a person who has overdosed on drugs, paramedics may be confronted with a violent person who poses a risk of injury to paramedics. Paramedics in the Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program would receive training, including tactical scene management, which would arguably make them better able to respond to these circumstances.

There would be no increased exposure to liability resulting from the care provided by paramedics in the Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program. Paramedics would be providing the same care to a patient. Paramedics would simply be at the patient's side earlier, which may positively impact the patient's health outcomes. As a result, The Regional Municipality of York would be subject to the same claims for damages resulting from the alleged negligence by paramedics in the performance of their duties as they would be without a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program.

Finally, any liabilities and claims made against The Regional Municipality of York resulting from the Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program would be handled in the same manner as other claims made against The Regional Municipality of York resulting from the acts or omissions of paramedics. Further, any claims for injuries

sustained by paramedics would be covered under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.

#### **4.7 Relationship to Vision 2026**

York Region EMS supports the Vision 2026 goal of Responding to the Needs of Our Residents by continuing to provide high quality and innovative emergency services in partnering with others.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Table 1 reflects conservative estimated operating costs to introduce the Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program for 2005 which would be subject to the 2005 Business Plan and Budget approval process. Staff training and operational deployment would be taken from regular operational assignments. No additional FTEs will be required to provide this expanded support to York Regional Police.

**Table 1**  
Preliminary Estimated 2005 Operating Costs  
Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic Program

|                                       | <b>Preliminary Estimated<br/>2005 Operating Costs</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Wage Premium (10 Tactical Paramedics) | \$ 1,530                                              |
| Training Backfill Costs (864 hours)   | 45,780                                                |
| Training (registration costs)         | 5,000                                                 |
| Equipment                             | 34,000                                                |
| <b>Total Tax Levy Impact</b>          | <b>\$ 86,310</b>                                      |

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

A Special Operations/Tactical program would improve resident access to specialized EMS/Police emergency response in the event they are involved in a Police-related emergency requiring activation of tactical paramedics.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of a Special Operations/Tactical Paramedic program would improve access to immediate medical attention for the residents of York Region involved in a Police-related emergency requiring activation of tactical paramedics. In addition the health and safety of Tactical Police would benefit from a Special Operations Tactical Paramedic Program when engaged in high risk situations.

It is recommended that this report be forwarded to the York Regional Police Service Board for review and comment.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

*(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the Agenda for the November 4, 2004 Committee meeting.)*