

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Community and Protective Services Committee
Comité des services communautaires et de protection
20 June 2019 / 20 juin 2019**

**and Council
et au Conseil
26 June 2019 / 26 juin 2019**

**Submitted on June 6, 2019
Soumis le 6 juin 2019**

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DE LA VILLE** **File Number: ACS2019-EPS-GEN-0007**

SUBJECT: Ottawa Paramedic Service 2018 Annual Report

OBJET: Rapport Annuel de 2018 du Service Paramédic d'Ottawa

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community and Protective Services Committee recommend Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des services communautaires et de protection recommande au Conseil de recevoir le rapport aux fins d'information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ottawa Paramedic Service provides progressive out-of-hospital patient care to the community and visitors of the Nation's Capital. The purpose of this report is to present an overview of the Ottawa Paramedic Service, to highlight the performance of the Service over the previous year and to provide information on some of the successful programs and services delivered in 2018.

In 2018, the Paramedic Service response volume was 144,309, representing a 3.4% increase over the previous year. Staff will continue to monitor service demand and emerging trends to report impacts to Council.

This report confirms that the Service had an overall improvement in performance and met all Council approved response time performance targets, including the community percentile target set for the arrival of a person trained, qualified and equipped to provide defibrillation for sudden cardiac arrest.

The Service has also continued to use a number of mitigation strategies to address increased demands on the service, such as:

- Paramedic Response Units;
- The Off-Load Nurse Pilot Program;
- The Community Paramedicine Partnership with the West Carleton Family Health Centre;
- The Targeted Engagement Diversion Program;
- Heart Safe City;
- The Neonatal Transport Team Pilot Program; and
- The Mental Health Strategy

Since amalgamation, the demand for the Paramedic Service has increased year-over-year. Council has made investments over the past fifteen years to address growth, response volume and to meet response time standards. The Paramedic Service continues to see this growth in demand and Council approved 14 full time equivalents in the 2019 budget to address increased demand for service.

The Paramedic Service continues to monitor performance indicators and evaluate new and innovative solutions in the interest of providing the highest quality of medical care to all patients.

BACKGROUND

The Ottawa Paramedic Service provides progressive out-of-hospital patient care and is dedicated to the community and visitors of the Nation's Capital. The Service is a dynamic leader in delivering and improving paramedicine, continuously seeking new knowledge and applying innovation. When a member of the public requires immediate medical care, an entire team of dedicated, highly qualified people come together to deliver excellence in clinical care. The Service consists of a team that includes Paramedics, Communications Officers, Equipment and Supply Technicians, Trainers, Quality Assurance Staff and critical Support Staff.

The Ottawa Paramedic Service provides emergency medical coverage across the City of Ottawa (2,796 square kilometres), while the Ottawa Central Ambulance Communication Centre provides dispatching services to over 10,000 square kilometres of Eastern Ontario, including the United Counties of Prescott-Russell, Cornwall and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. The Service provides a fully integrated advanced life support system delivering state of the art medical services to more than one million residents and visitors.

The City of Ottawa operates the Paramedic Service under an agreement with Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and is certified every three years. The parameters of this responsibility are defined through a Land Ambulance Agreement and the *Ambulance Act of Ontario*, whereby the Province of Ontario funds 50% of land ambulance services and 100% of the cost for the Ottawa Central Ambulance Communications Centre.

On October 28, 2004, the Emergency and Protective Services Committee directed that staff report back annually to Committee and Council prior to budget on performance trends, mitigation strategies and associated financial impacts to ensure the Service can maintain its baseline performance targets. As well, the Ottawa Paramedic Service

reports annually to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on response time performance.

This report highlights the service demand (response volume), as well as the Service's performance for 2018.

DISCUSSION

Performance Trends

The highest priority for the Ottawa Paramedic Service is to provide the best possible clinical care to the residents and visitors of Ottawa. The Service regularly analyzes response times, response volumes and patient outcomes in order to maximize the deployment and usage of paramedic resources. The primary measures that determine service demand and associated resource requirements are:

- The total number of 9-1-1 calls received;
- The total number of patients assessed, treated, and transported; and
- The total number of Paramedic resources required to respond.

Paramedic Response Volume

Year over year response volume continues to increase in the City of Ottawa. This can be attributed to a number of factors including population growth and an aging patient demographic. In 2018, the Paramedic Service response volume was 144,309, representing a 3.4% increase over the previous year. The five-year trend demonstrates a 12.8% overall increase.

Table 1 represents the response volume and the annual percentage growth over the last five years.

Table 1: Response Volumes

Year	Responses	% Change
2014	127,896	n/a
2015	133,973	4.8%
2016	137,995	3.0%

Year	Responses	% Change
2017	139,514	1.1%
2018	144,309	3.4%
Total		12.8%

Paramedic Response Time Standards

The legislated response time reporting framework is defined as the elapsed time from when the first Paramedic Unit is notified of the call for service to the arrival of a Paramedic resource on scene (ambulance or single response unit). Response times across the Province of Ontario are measured and reported publicly on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) website.

Response time performance is based on the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS), which sets a score for the acuity level of a patient, with CTAS 1 being the highest acuity. The MOHLTC determines the time target for CTAS 1 patients while the percentile rank is the Council-approved performance standard. The percentage represents how often a Paramedic Unit has arrived on scene to provide paramedic services to patients within the established targeted response time, categorized based on the CTAS score.

The acuity of the patient (CTAS score) can only be determined once a paramedic has arrived on scene to conduct a medical assessment.

Table 2 outlines the legislated response time standard targets and results from 2014 to 2018 by CTAS category. In 2018, the Service met the Council approved percentile rank in all CTAS categories for the second consecutive year.

Table 2: Response Time Performance

Category (Acuity)	Target Time (minutes)	Council Approved Percentile	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CTAS 1 (Life Threatening)	8:00*	75%	79.5%	72.5%	73.2%	77.3%	78.0%
CTAS 2 (Urgent)	10:00	75%	82.9%	80.8%	78.6%	79.6%	80.3%

Category (Acuity)	Target Time (minutes)	Council Approved Percentile	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CTAS 3	15:00	75%	93.5%	91.9%	90.9%	91.2%	91.5%
CTAS 4	20:00	75%	98.0%	96.4%	95.6%	94.8%	94.8%
CTAS 5	25:00	75%	99.2%	97.6%	97.5%	97.1%	96.6%

*Mandated by provincial regulations

Community Target for Cardiac Arrest

In cases of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), response time is defined as the elapsed time from when the first Paramedic Unit is notified to the arrival of any person trained and equipped to provide defibrillation. The SCA response time is positively impacted if a public access defibrillator is available at the scene or by the arrival of a paramedic, police officer, firefighter or OC Transpo Security, who are all equipped with a defibrillator in their vehicles.

Table 3 shows the City of Ottawa's performance against the legislated response time standard for SCA. In 2018, the Ottawa Paramedic Service continued to meet the legislated response time.

Table 3: Response Time Performance

Category	Target Time (minutes)	Council Approved Percentile	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)	6:00*	65%	63.0%	63.7%	69.3%	68.2%	73.2%

*Mandated by provincial regulations

Ottawa Central Ambulance Communications Centre System Performance

The Ottawa Central Ambulance Communications Centre (OCACC) receives and triages 9-1-1 calls and dispatches paramedic resources across 10,000 square kilometres of Eastern Ontario.

In 2018, the OCACC answered 140,621 emergency calls, which required 180,630 emergency vehicle responses, an increase of 3.2% from 2017. Note that some emergency calls require more than one resource depending on the complexity of the situation and the number of patients.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has created response time standards (call processing times) for all ambulance communications centres in the Province of Ontario. The response time standards are measured as the time difference between when the call is received at the communications centre and when a Paramedic Unit has been notified of an emergency call. Communications Centres must report annually to the Ministry of Health on the percentage of time this process is completed within two minutes. Table 4 demonstrates the City of Ottawa call processing times for CTAS 1 and Sudden Cardiac Arrest patients.

Table 4: OCACC Call Processing Times

Category	Target Time (minutes)	Percentile	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CTAS 1	2:00	80%	86.8%	88.9%	84.8%	80.4%	84.6%
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	2:00	75%	89.1%	88.7%	87.5%	81.0%	86.0%

Paramedic Response Unit

The Paramedic Response Unit (PRU) is a vehicle staffed with a single Primary Care Paramedic. These Units are strategically placed around the city to provide rapid response to emergency calls to initiate patient care. Upon arrival, the PRU can potentially downgrade the call and/or cancel a transport unit (ambulance), thereby allowing the transport crew to respond to the next emergency call. The PRU provides continual coverage in their assigned area, as they do not transport patients to hospital and are immediately available upon clearing a call. The Paramedic Response Unit initiative utilized by the Ottawa Paramedic Service is an industry best practice for deployment.

In 2018, Paramedic Response Units completed 18,431 responses, an 11.4% increase in vehicle responses over 2017. The PRU program has an eight-minute response time performance of 78.5%.

Off-Load Nurse Pilot Program

The Operations Division of the Ottawa Paramedic Service continues to oversee the Off-Load Nurse Pilot Program, which is 100% funded by the province. This program is a partnership between the MOHLTC, local emergency departments and the Ottawa Paramedic Service. This initiative is intended to allow Paramedics to transfer the care of a patient to the designated off-load nurse within the hospital's emergency department. The transfer of care is an effort to expedite the return of paramedic resources to the community as soon as possible, thus increasing availability to respond to other medical emergencies. In 2017, the Province committed \$1.5 million for the 2017-2018 fiscal year to continue the pilot project. While the Off-Load Nurse Pilot Program does expedite transfer time, in some cases, in 2018 paramedics spent 35,145 hours waiting in a hospital to transfer a patient.

Community Paramedicine

In 2014, the Ottawa Paramedic Service identified a single Community Paramedic to work with the West Carleton Family Health Team as part of a Community Paramedicine Pilot Program funded by the MOHLTC. The program increased to three Community Paramedics in October 31, 2017. However, due to a decrease in funding from the MOHLTC, the program now runs with a single Community Paramedic.

Community Paramedics are an integral part of the Family Health Team and are responsible for conducting proactive home visits to complex medical needs patients. The program aims to reduce the impact of patients on health services, including calling on paramedics, while also improving the patient's quality of life. The mobility of having a Community Paramedic makes it particularly useful to patients in rural areas with respect to being able to stay well at home.

This initiative has proven to be very successful. Currently, 565 active clients are in the Ottawa catchment area. This increased from 78 active clients in 2017. The program continues to be successful and is 100% funded through the MOHLTC.

Targeted Engagement Diversion (TED)

The successful partnership between the Ottawa Paramedic Service, Ottawa Inner-City Health, the Shepherds of Good Hope, the Ottawa Hospital and the Ottawa Police Service continued throughout 2018. The Program works to identify and assist vulnerable, homeless individuals who suffer from substance abuse issues as well as severe and persistent mental health issues and as a result, frequently use 9-1-1 services. As part of the TED program, Paramedics transport specific homeless patients to a specialized clinic as an alternative to bringing them to the hospital's emergency department. TED is a unique initiative that aims to deliver enhanced and specialized care to a vulnerable patient demographic while also addressing the steady increase in demand for Paramedic resources. In 2018, 1,040 patients, or approximately 2.8 patients per day, were transferred to the Shepherds of Good Hope rather than an emergency department.

Heart Safe City

The Ottawa Paramedic Service continues to be a leader with the Heart Safe City initiative, a partnership between the Paramedic Service, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Advanced Coronary treatment (ACT) Foundation, Maharaja's Ball and private businesses. This program has resulted in the placement and oversight of over 1,200 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in public and private buildings as well as police, fire, all O-Train Line 1 Stations and OC Transpo vehicles since 2001. Since then, the Public Access Defibrillator program has directly contributed to bystanders saving 132 lives. In an effort to strengthen the "chain of survival" (a series of actions that can reduce mortality associated with cardiac arrest), in 2018 the Community Medicine Team delivered 660 First Aid, CPR and AED courses to 7,144 individuals.

Neonatal Transport Team Pilot Program

In partnership with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the Service is participating in a pilot program to help the region's youngest patients. A dedicated, specially equipped ambulance serves CHEO's neonatal transport team, which was purchased through a grant provided by the CHEO Foundation. This ambulance provides the team with the equipment they need to respond as quickly as possible in an emergency. The ambulance is equipped with a power lift that can smoothly move fragile patients in and out of the vehicle, which eliminate the need for two paramedic crews and the risk of workplace injuries. The team responded to 317 calls in 2018. The Paramedic Service will continue to monitor the success of this program and has been working with the Ministry of Health on a long-term provincial strategy to mitigate these requests by

other communities with Pediatric transport teams. For 2019, the MOHLTC has indicated that they will directly fund this program.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Legislation and Mental Health Strategy

In response to legislation changes, which recognized post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a work-related illness for paramedics and communication officers, the Emergency and Protective Services Department created a Mental Health Strategy. The focus of the strategy is around prevention, awareness and support. In 2018, all front-line Paramedic Service staff and the Service's Peer Support Team were trained on the Road to Mental Health Readiness (R2MR) program, the industry standard for mental health training and resiliency for first responders. The Ottawa Paramedic Service is part of the First Responder Mental Health Network Collaboration committee with Ottawa Fire Services and Ottawa Police Service. Through this Committee, the Service is involved in mental health research and evaluating a personalized approach for treatment of mental health disorders in the City's tri-services (Paramedics, Police and Fire). In early 2019, first responders will be evaluating the effectiveness of a First Responder Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Health clinic using a dedicated First Responder Health Team.

The Peer Support Program Peer Support team consisting of 50 members is available to assist staff when needed. Peer support staff have been working to become proactive in supporting staff. Members are available for support on a day-to-day basis, and have regular check-ins to discuss difficult and/or traumatic calls.

Max is a key member of the OPS peer support team and the first therapy dog in Canada to be trained in a Paramedic Service. Max is a golden retriever and certified therapy dog who is available to support on-duty paramedic service personnel.

Diversity

The Ottawa Paramedic Service has an active Diversity Champion Program (DCP) that works to educate and inform OPS Staff and engages with co-workers' and patients. Through events and outreach activities held in 2018, the Paramedic Service was able to engage staff using three main objectives:

- Supporting the current diversity within the Ottawa Paramedic Service;
- Engaging and building relationships with diverse communities in Ottawa allowing us to learn how we can better meet their unique needs and to educate them on what we need from them;

- Improving diversity through recruitment and retention strategies to ensure that the Ottawa Paramedic Service is diverse and representative of the community we serve.

The Ottawa Paramedic Service supported a number of events, public engagement, staff education efforts, in collaboration with the DCP. In an ongoing effort to educate and raise awareness, the DCP will provide a forum for dialogue, research and knowledge transfer regarding issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

In 2018, the DCP participated in a wide-range of activities and initiatives within the three pillars of change: hiring, retention and safe to self-identify.

PAW (Paramedic Awareness Week) Camp, a one-week learning camp, teaches what it is like to be a paramedic, and the process for pursuing a career as a paramedic. In 2018, 22 youth participated in PAW and there was a wait list of 20 additional participants. The 2018 cohort was very diverse including six different spoken languages and 18 ethnicities. Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) (a tool that helps people assess their strengths and weaknesses when adapting to new cultures) was rolled out in 2018. A variety of companies and organizations are delivering CCAI, targeting onboarding, diversity Council members, members of recruiting, acquisition and development teams. DCP also participated in a number of Career Fairs such as the Rainbow Youth Forum, International Students Forum, and Ottawa Welcome Event for International Students, Intercultural Dialogue Institute Women's Day Event, Adult High School Career Fairs, Jim Durrell Career Fair, AccessAbility Fair, IDI Iftar Dinner, and City of Ottawa Career Showcase and Indigenous Career Fair at Algonquin College. In addition, DCP participated in over 20 school presentations and school tours at the Paramedic Service Headquarters.

Looking Ahead

The Ottawa Paramedic Service remains committed to establishing an accountable, open and transparent relationship with the public. The Service is trusted to provide an established level of care prescribed by legislation and has an accountability framework that promotes adherence to this level of care.

Response volumes have increased by 12.8% over the previous five years. Because of the investments by Council and the mitigation strategies implemented by the Service, response times were met across all CTAS categories in 2018.

The Paramedic Service headquarters has reached its maximum capacity related to vehicle deployments and staffing. The Service has initiated a review for the construction of a West Deployment Facility in order to meet citywide growth demands. All other facility growth for the Paramedic Service has been deferred with capital funds being allocated to a future West Deployment Facility.

The Ottawa Paramedic Service is a team of dedicated, highly qualified people who come together to deliver quality clinical care to members of the public who require immediate medical care. The Service will continue to monitor performance and trends and report back to Council as part of the 2019 Annual Report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

CONSULTATION

There were no consultations required as part of this information report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no legal impediment to receiving the information contained in this report.

It is noted that the City of Ottawa has an obligation pursuant to Subsection 6(1) (b) of the Ambulance Act “for ensuring the proper provision of land ambulance services in the municipality in accordance with the needs of persons in the municipality.” In discharging this responsibility, pursuant to Subsection 6(8) of the Act, the City must “ensure the supply of vehicles, equipment, services, information and any other thing necessary for the proper provision of land ambulance services in the municipality in accordance with this Act and the regulations.” The determination of what constitute the “needs of persons in the municipality” is left to City Council and is effectively determined by Council’s establishment of the response time standards required by the regulations to the Ambulance Act, which are referenced earlier in this Report. The discretion in City Council to make this decision as to ambulance service standards acknowledges its policy-making role in balancing the service expectations of residents in the municipality. Including the cost of providing a particular level of ambulance service, “bearing in mind the budgetary restraints imposed and the availability of personnel and equipment”, to use the phrase articulated by the Supreme Court of Canada.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications associated with receiving this report for information.

ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The West Deployment Facility is included in the 2019 Capital Budget.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

There are no impacts on the Term of Council Priorities associated with this report.

DISPOSITION

The Ottawa Paramedic Service will action any direction received as part of consideration of this report.