



County Council

Meeting Date: September 28, 2021

Submitted by: Neal Roberts, Chief, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service,
and Director, Emergency Services

Subject: 2021 AMBULANCE SERVICE REVIEW DRAFT REPORT

BACKGROUND:

The *Ambulance Act* requires operators of Ontario's ambulance services to hold certificates issued by the Emergency Health Services Branch of the Ministry of Health. The prime requirement of the certificate is that ambulance service operators successfully complete a comprehensive Ambulance Service Review every three years.

The Review typically consists on an on-site evaluation of the Service Provider to ensure they meet the requirements of all applicable legislation and standards. The Review Team inspects stations and ambulances; conducts ride-outs on ambulance calls; interviews management and staff; and reviews documentation such as Ambulance Call Reports, vehicle and equipment maintenance records, staff qualifications and training records, as well as service policies and procedures. During COVID, the Ministry of Health modified their Ambulance Service Review Process to request and collect information (as required) through electronic means, including several virtual meetings with Middlesex London Paramedic Service. The Ambulance Service Review focuses upon three main areas: Patient Care; Quality Assurance; and Administration. To meet certification standards, a Service Provider must meet two thresholds:

1. 90%+ for Patient Care (which represents 70% of the overall inspection); and
2. 90%+ overall score (Patient Care 70%, Quality Assurance 20%, Administration 10%)

The previous Ambulance Service Review was conducted in 2019, where Middlesex London Paramedic Service was issued a 3 year license renewal. As part of the new COVID process, most aspects of the Ambulance Service review were covered off during the virtual process with the exception of onsite inspections and Paramedic Rideouts.

Once COVID restrictions are lifted the Ministry of Health will send in members from the Ambulance Service Review Team to conduct onsite evaluations and conclude the process. All Paramedic Services are also subject to Ministry of Health Unannounced Inspections.

On August 25, 2021, the Ministry of Health provided Middlesex London Paramedic Service with the draft report on the Ambulance Service Review (process). The report contained the following findings:

“Middlesex London Paramedic Service is to be commended for its efforts in the following areas:

- Preparation for the certification inspection
- Quality Assurance Program
- Training

The Ministry of Health Report also contained the following five (5) observations:

Ministry of Health Observation 1:

The Service Provider has a preventative maintenance program in place for patient carrying equipment and devices. All patient care devices requiring regular inspection and/or calibration e.g. oxygen delivery systems, suction equipment, and defibrillator were included within the Service Provider’s Preventative Maintenance program. The service’s oxygen testing equipment had not always been calibrated according to the manufacturer’s specifications (*both TC19 and TC58 units were overdue by a month for their 2019 calibrations*).

Middlesex London Paramedic Service Response:

Middlesex London Paramedic acknowledges this finding and has implemented stronger measures and oversight to ensure that all equipment is maintained as per established schedules on time or in advance of scheduled maintenance timeframes.

Ministry of Health Observation 2:

The Service Provider did not always report to the Field Office the Influenza Immunization status of each employee no later than directed by EHRAB each year (*email to Field Office for 2020-2021 was not sent until March 22, 2021*

Middlesex London Paramedic Service Response:

Middlesex London Paramedic Service acknowledges that it was delayed in filing the required paperwork, but did complete surveying all staff within the 2020 calendar year.

Ministry of Health Observation 3:

The Service Provider produced a report demonstrating they did not always meet their Response Time Performance Plan (*CTAS 2 targets for the past 3 years and SCA targets for 2020 and 2018 were not met*).

Middlesex London Paramedic Service Response:

Middlesex London Paramedic Service acknowledges this finding. Response Time Targets are set each year and reviewed by County Council. As per prior Council Reports, several factors affect the service's attempts to meet response time targets, these include:

- Offload Delays at the emergency departments, delaying crews ability to launch and detaining available resources within the system,
- Increased call demands
- Not having direct control of dispatch and deployment of ambulances within the system.

Ministry of Health Observation 4:

"The Service Provider has provided a copy of their deployment plan suitable for implementation to the Field Office. Documentation demonstrates the service does not always have sufficient staff at each level of qualification to meet their written deployment plan (*down staffing occurred on multiple dates*)."

Middlesex London Paramedic Service Response:

Middlesex London Paramedic Service does not dispute this finding, but down staffing does occur from time to time due to illness/injury during shifts, staff that are taken out of service temporarily due to a traumatic event (for debriefing). Staffing and resources are restored as quickly as possible with available staff (when required).

Ministry of Health Observation 5:

"The Service Provider did not have a policy covering the following area:

Regarding transport of a person's remains as per legislation (*Service is in the process of updating this policy*).

Middlesex London Paramedic Service Response:

Middlesex London Paramedic Service acknowledges this finding and did have a policy in place that addresses this observation. In order to address the observation identified

by the Ministry of Health Inspector, a revised policy with a direct reference to this area has been implemented.

SUMMARY:

In summary, the Ambulance Service Review confirmed that the Middlesex-London Paramedic Service continues to provide high quality ambulance service for the citizens and visitors to the County of Middlesex and City of London. Middlesex London Paramedic Service staff have followed up with the Ministry of Health regarding the five observations noted in the draft report.

Middlesex County Council will be provided with further updates on this process as the Ministry resumes their onsite inspections and visits.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive this report for information.