

Meeting Date: March 14, 2023
Submitted by: Neal Roberts, Chief, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service
Subject: MLPS 2023 Response Time Performance Plan Compliance

BACKGROUND:

Legislation under the Ambulance Act requires municipalities to both establish Response Time Performance Plans (RTPPs) for the coming year and notify the Ministry of Health (MOH) of these plans no later than October 31st each year, and then to report on compliance with these plans by March 31st of the following year.

All RTPPs and performance results are posted for public viewing on the MOHLTC website: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/land/responsetime.html.

Response Time Performance Plans are set response time targets for patients categorized under the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale ("CTAS") 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and Sudden Cardiac Arrests.

- CTAS: a five-level triage scale with the highest severity level 1 (resuscitation) and the lowest severity levels 5 (non-urgent) used to assign a level of acuity to patients and more accurately define the patient's need for care primarily based on the optimal time to medical intervention.
- CTAS Level 1: CTAS level assigned for resuscitation. Patients need to be seen by a physician immediately. Examples include: Cardiac / Respiratory arrest, major trauma, unconscious patients, severe respiratory distress.
- CTAS Level 2: CTAS level assigned for emergent. Patients need to be seen by a physician within 15 minutes. Examples include: altered mental states, head injury, severe trauma, heart attacks, overdose and stroke.
- CTAS Level 3: CTAS level assigned for urgent. Patients need to be seen by a physician within 30 minutes. Examples include: moderate trauma, asthma, GI bleed, suicidal thoughts and acute pain.

- CTAS Level 4: CTAS level assigned for less urgent. Patients need to be seen by a physician within 60 minutes. Examples include: headache, corneal foreign body and chronic back pain.
- CTAS Level 5: CTAS level assigned for non-urgent. Patients need to be seen by a physician within 120 minutes. Examples include: sore throat, mild abdominal pain which is chronic or recurring, with normal vital signs, vomiting alone and diarrhea alone.

ANALYSIS:

The 2021 Middlesex-London Paramedic Service performance results were as follows:

January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021	Target Response Time	% Achieved Target	Number of Calls that met response time	% Achieved
SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST (defib on scene)	6 minutes	75%	269/405	66.42%
CTAS Level				
1	8 minutes	75%	114/1473	77.66%
2	8 minutes	75%	8464/12589	67.23%
3	10 minutes	75%	22304/29846	74.73%
4	12 minutes	75%	8292/10278	80.74%
5	12 minutes	75%	2454/3021	81.23%

For the year of 2021, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service was compliant in all but Sudden Cardiac Arrest calls and CTAS 2 calls. The on-scene CTAS Level 1 calls (which are the most emergent) increased whereas CTAS 3, CTAS 4 and CTAS 5 calls remained consistent with the previous year.

The 2022 Middlesex-London Paramedic Service performance results from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 are as follows:

January 1, 2022- December 31, 2022	Target Response Time	% Achieved Target	Number of Calls that met response time	% Achieved
SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST (defib on scene)	6 minutes	60%	167/405	65.93%
CTAS Level				
1	8 minutes	70%	114/1577	72.54%
2	10 minutes	75%	10420/13352	78.04%
3	15 minutes	80%	27144/30187	89.92%
4	20 minutes	90%	10505/10959	95.86%
5	20 minutes	90%	3030/3159	95.92%

For the year of 2022, Middlesex-London Paramedic Service was compliant with all response time standards targets.

Increased safety measures that were put in to place to protect paramedics and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic remain in place and continue to impact response times for sudden cardiac arrests (SCA) patients.

Middlesex-London Paramedic Service completed an operational review of the deployment of paramedic resources and updated the Deployment and Utilization Strategy to align with this review and have seen an improvement in CTAS 2, 3, 4 and 5 response times.

Of importance to note is that Middlesex–London Paramedic Service does not directly control the day-to-day fleet deployment which impacts response times. This is controlled by the Ministry of Health through the London Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC). We continue to work with the CACC to optimize our deployment plans for maximum efficiency and effectiveness, and continue to monitor CACC compliance with our plans.

Also, of note is that the triage tool currently utilized by London CACC and the majority of the dispatch centres in the province does not align properly with the CTAS system. Quite often, we are being inappropriately prioritized during responses to calls. MLPS

ambulances are being over triaged at a rate of 85% which is contributing to the impact on response times.

In addition to these pressures, frequent and extended offload delays result in less ambulances in the community to respond to calls, requiring the remaining ambulances that are available ambulances to travel greater distances to respond to calls.

Several years ago, the Ministry of Health announced that the province will be implementing a new call triage system which should improve our response time results, especially with the more emergent call types; however, this new system has yet to be implemented in any of the dispatch centres putting it several years behind schedule. There still has been no indication of an implementation date and Middlesex-London Paramedic Service does not expect to see this new triage tool implemented for quite some time.

In October of 2021, Middlesex County Council approved adjustments to response time targets to reflect the services levels for Middlesex-London Paramedic Service in the face of ongoing demands and challenges. These adjustments are effective January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022, or until such time Middlesex County Council determines that the plan requires additional changes. Middlesex-London Paramedic Service has met all response time targets for the 2023 year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives: Promoting Service Excellence. Middlesex-London Paramedic Service monitors ambulance response times and continues to make improvements to ensure that response time standards are met and to ensure efficient and effective service for the citizens of Middlesex County.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Middlesex-London Paramedic Service Response Time Performance Plan results be received for information; and

THAT County Council direct the Chief, Middlesex London Paramedic Service to submit the annual performance report to the Ontario Ministry of Health, no later than March 31, 2023.