

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE



To / Destinataire Mayor & Members of Council File/N° de fichier:
From / Expéditeur Anthony Di Monte, A/ General Manager
Emergency and Protective Services
Subject / Objet Direction to Staff Date: March 18, 2016
Re:Paramedic Staffing Requirements

On February 25, 2016 Community and Protective Services Committee approved the following direction:

“That staff provide as much information as possible with respect to the correct number of additional paramedics that would be required to meet 2015 growth and 2016 growth to date, and that this be provided to Council prior to Council consideration of motion(s) to set any new staff level”.

The purpose of this memorandum is to respond to the above direction.

Response Volume

Since amalgamation, the demand for the Paramedic Service has increased year-over-year and recently has begun to outpace current staffing levels and vehicles availability. Council has made significant investments over the past fifteen years to address growth and meet response time standards. The key drivers for service demand are population growth, an aging population (where patients 55 years and over represent 57% of the total response volume) and an increase to the number of visitors to the Nation’s Capital.

The most common indicator for measuring service demand is response volume, which is defined by the total number of paramedic resources required to respond to an incident.

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

Table 1: Response Volumes

Year	Responses	%
2011	108,331	N/A
2012	120,898	11.6%
2013	119,292	-1.3%
2014	127,883	7.2%
2015*	133,120	4.1%
Total Increase	24,789	22.9%

*Note that the 2015 responses are based on the most recent data provided by the Province and the final data is anticipated by the end of Q1 2016.

A 22.9% total increase in response volume represents a 5.8% average annual increase. As a result of increasing response volumes, designated rural resources are required to respond to the urban core where demand is the greatest. Consequently, this creates a greater reliance on surrounding municipalities which are then required to respond to the City's rural wards.

Council invested 24 FTEs in the Paramedic Service in 2011. Since then, 7.00 FTEs have been deleted from the Service as efficiencies and the total annual response volume has increased by 24,789, which represents 68 more responses each day.

Based on the 5.8% average annual increase, staff is projecting response volumes to be at approximately 140,840 by the end of 2016.

Response Time Performance

Since 2013, when new legislation came into effect, the established response time target has been 8:00 minutes city-wide for the most critical patients.

The change in legislation enabled municipalities to set percentile rank targets, using the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS) for each acuity category based on the patient's severity, as assessed by paramedics on scene (CTAS Levels 1 to 5). The legislative change resulted in a new standard (75th percentile), which enabled municipalities to absorb the growth in call volume / service demand.

Table 2 demonstrates Response Time Performance over the last three years.

Table 2: Response Time Performance since the enacted New Legislation

Category (Acuity)	Target Time (minutes)	Council Approved Percentile Rank	2013	2014	2015
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	6:00	65%	75.5%	63.0%	TBD*
CTAS I (Life Threatening)	8:00	75%	83.6%	79.5%	72.4%**
CTAS II (Urgent)	10:00	75%	85.5%	82.9%	81.0%

*Data Call – data will also be gathered and provided by the Ottawa Police Service and Ottawa Fire Services

**Data from the Province as of February 29, 2016. Final data is anticipated by the end of Q1 2016.

As a result of increasing response volumes, the Ottawa Paramedic Service were slightly below the response time Council approved percentile for the year 2015 for patients categorized CTAS level 1, which are the most critical patients. The City's ability to meet the Council established response times, given the 2015 growth in call volume would be addressed with the addition of twelve (12) paramedics and four (4) emergency response vehicles, as outlined in the motion that will be before Council on March 23, 2016.

Paramedic Service Review

Council has directed staff to complete a review of paramedic services to identify current and future operational needs and efficiency opportunities. The results of the review will be tabled in June along with the 2015 Ottawa Paramedic Service Annual Report which will include the final data from the Province. The Service Review is well underway and staff will be reporting back to Council prior to the development of the 2017 draft Operating and Capital Budgets with respect to future needs, and the Review will also determine if there are efficiency opportunities to help offset the projected growth for 2016.

The Service Review currently underway will assess how the response volume growth is impacting the Service's capability of meeting its performance targets and will identify the number of staff hours that would be required to address the gap (based on the average time spent on a call).

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Anthony Di Monte
A/General Manager, Emergency and Protective Services

cc: Susan Jones, A/Deputy City Manager, City Operations
Peter Kelly, A/Chief, Ottawa Paramedic Service