

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Paramedic Services

2023 Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Oxford County Council approve the 2023 Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan as set out in Report No. PS 2022-02.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The proposed response time performance plan remains consistent with previously approved response time performance for 2015 - 2022 and actual performance experienced in 2022.
- The Oxford plan has been benchmarked for consistency with other municipal plans.

Implementation Points

Once the plan is approved by Council, it will be submitted to EHRAB where it will be publicly available on their website. Oxford County Paramedic Services is required to continually monitor compliance with the plan and investigate all occurrences where response times did not meet requirements. Prior to March 31st of each year, the County is required to report actual compliance with the approved plan for the preceding year to the Director of EHRAB.







Financial Impact

There is no financial impact that will result based on the recommendation contained in this report.

Communications

Required submissions to the Ministry of Health, Emergency Health Regulatory and Accountability Services Branch will be provided in accordance with the legislation and service agreement requirements.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
				5.ii.	

DISCUSSION

Background

Since 2013, Ontario Regulation 257/00 (Part VIII), under the Ambulance Act, requires each municipality responsible for overseeing land ambulance services to approve a land ambulance response time performance plan and submit the plan to the Director of Emergency Health Regulatory and Accountability Services Branch (EHRAB) prior to October 31st each year.

The performance plans set out the response time and percentile achievement for patients meeting the Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS) levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The regulation established an 8 minute response time standard for CTAS 1 patients. Municipalities have the flexibility to set response times for CTAS 2-5 patients and percentile achievement for all CTAS criteria. The response time for municipalities is measured from the time a paramedic crew is notified of a call to arrival of the first crew on-scene. A description of the CTAS levels is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 – Canadian Triage Acuity Scale Levels

CTAS Level	Clinical Presentation
CTAS 1 Resuscitation	Conditions that are threats to life or limb (or imminent risk of deterioration) requiring immediate aggressive interventions. Cardiac arrest/major trauma/severe respiratory distress.
CTAS 2 Emergent	Conditions that are a potential threat to life, limb or function, requiring rapid medical intervention or controlled acts. Head injury/severe trauma/chest pain.
CTAS 3 Urgent	Conditions that could potentially progress to a serious problem requiring emergency intervention. May be associated with significant discomfort or affecting ability to function at work or activities of daily living. Moderate trauma/assault/moderate respiratory distress.
CTAS 4 Less Urgent	Conditions that relate to patient age, distress, or potential for deterioration or complications would benefit from intervention or reassurance within 1-2 hours. Minor trauma/abdominal pain/headache/back pain.
CTAS 5 Non-Urgent	Conditions that may be acute but non-urgent as well as conditions which may be part of a chronic problem with or without evidence of deterioration. The investigation or interventions for some of these illnesses or injuries could be delayed or even referred to other areas of the hospital or health care system. Sore throat/vomiting/minor symptoms.

The goal of the performance plan is to:

- Provide response time standards where medical evidence exists to support the establishment of a target response time.
- Provide reporting that matches the needs of the patient to the performance of the municipality in meeting those needs.
- Provide reporting that is accountable, transparent and comparable between municipalities.
- Provide municipalities flexibility in the establishment of response time measures for different patient acuities to achieve greater efficiency in the deployment of current paramedic resources.

In addition to the response time performance plan, the County is required to report the percentage of times a person equipped with a defibrillator arrived on scene to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest within six minutes of notification. The County is not required to establish a target response time for this patient classification.

Comments

Development of the 2023 response time plan considered response time targets in accordance with the regulations, supporting medical evidence, and, acceptable customer service levels. Table 2 provides the approved 2022 Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan for the County of Oxford along with the current percentile compliance with the established targets for the period January 1 to August 31, 2022. The current Oxford County Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan is being met within existing approved resources.

Paramedic Services has now completed the implementation plan for service enhancements from the Ten-Year Comprehensive Master Plan presented in Report No. [PS 2018-01](#). The 2022 response times for all CTAS levels show improvement over the 2018/19 response times, although they have been trending down due to increasing call volumes and other healthcare system pressures. In 2021, OCPS responded to 17,250 emergency calls for service, an increase of 15.4% from the previous year. To maintain ambulance availability for life-threatening emergencies, non-emergent calls will be held in cue until sufficient ambulance resources are available. These instances were more frequent in 2021 (as well as the first half of 2022), which results in longer response times to these call types which are typically CTAS 3, 4, and 5. With the relatively lower overall number of CTAS 5 calls, these variances have a greater impact to the consolidated response time.

Table 2 – 2022 Oxford County Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan

CTAS Level	Regulatory Standard Response Time	Municipal Approved Response Time	Municipal Approved Percentile	2020 Actual Performance ¹		2021 Actual Performance ¹		2022 Year to Date Performance ¹	
				System		System		System	
				Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1	<8 Minutes		70%	75.6%		75.4%		75.4%	
				92.0%	40.4%	89.7%	44.0%	89.7%	44.0%
2		<10 Minutes	80%	84.2%		81.3%		81.3%	
				95.8%	53.4%	94.3%	52.6%	94.3%	52.6%
3		<15 Minutes	90%	95.0%		94.9%		94.9%	
				98.6%	84.4%	98.0%	85.2%	98.0%	85.2%
4		<15 Minutes	80%	94.5%		93.7%		93.7%	
				97.1%	82.7%	97.1%	81.3%	97.1%	81.3%
5		<15 Minutes	80%	94.7%		91.88%		91.9%	
				97.8%	81.8%	96.9%	76.9%	96.9%	72.3%

¹Data Source – Oxford County iMedic EPCR Analytics

In preparing the 2023 performance plan, the 2022 plans from several municipalities were reviewed. For CTAS levels 1, 2 and 3, 16 municipalities use response time targets identical or very similar to the Oxford plan. For CTAS levels 4 and 5, there is discrepancy in target response times. Percentile targets for all criteria vary between jurisdictions. Apart from much of the GTA, which has used a 75th percentile for all categories, it appears most have established percentile criteria based on historical performance as in the Oxford Plan. The target response times for CTAS levels 1 and 2 are most important as this includes the largest subset of patients for which response time and timely access to paramedic or hospital intervention is most beneficial.

Table 3 provides the municipal comparators' response time targets illustrating that they are relatively consistent with the County of Oxford plan.

Table 3 – Municipal Response Time Targets for CTAS 1, 2 and 3

Municipality	CTAS 1 Target Response Time	CTAS 2 Target Response Time	CTAS 3 Target Response Time
County of Bruce	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
County of Elgin	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<14 Minutes
County of Essex	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<12 Minutes
County of Norfolk	<8 Minutes	<13 Minutes	<13 Minutes
County of Wellington	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Region of Durham	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Region of Halton	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Region of Peel	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<13 Minutes
County of Simcoe	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
City of Toronto	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Region of York	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Hastings-Quinte	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Lennox-Addington	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
City of Ottawa	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
Prince Edward County	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes
City of Sudbury	<8 Minutes	<10 Minutes	<15 Minutes

A measure of deviation is taken into consideration when projecting future performance utilizing historical accomplishment. Most of the variables that can affect performance are not within the control of the County of Oxford and may not be known at the time the plans are being developed. These can include variability or increases in call volume, hospital off-load delays, inclement weather, emergency department closures, dispatch prioritization errors and changes in resource deployment by neighbouring paramedic services where cross-border services are relied upon.

Conclusions

Based on a review of the 2020 and 2021 actual performance and the 2022 data up to August 31st, the current Oxford County Land Ambulance Response Time Performance Plan is being met within existing resources. Additionally, the response time targets utilized by the County of Oxford are consistent with many municipalities in Ontario. Staff recommends the 2023 plan remain identical to the 2015 through 2022 plan as set out in Table 2.

SIGNATURES

Departmental Approval:

Original signed by

Ryan Hall
Director of Paramedic Services

Approved for submission:

Original signed by

Benjamin R. Addley
Interim Chief Administrative Officer