



Staff Report

Meeting Date: September 21, 2023

To: Greater Peterborough Joint Services Committee

Report Number: PAR 2023-04

Title: Peterborough Paramedics Response Time Plan, 2024

Author: Randy Mellow, Chief of Paramedics

Approval: Sheridan Graham, CAO

Recommendation: That Report PAR 2023-04, Peterborough Paramedics Response Time Plan, 2023 be received, and;

That the Response Time Performance Plan for submission under Part VIII of Ontario Regulation 257/00 made under the Ambulance Act be approved.

Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide Peterborough County Council and GPJSC (Greater Peterborough Joint Services Committee) with analysis and recommendation for the approval of the Land Ambulance Service Response Time Performance Plan for 2024 as mandated by the Ambulance Act.

Background

Part VIII of Ontario Regulation 257/00 made under the Ambulance Act, mandated a change to ambulance response time standards that came into effect January 1, 2013. Contrary to the earlier standard which was based on local ambulance service performance in 1996 (at the time of transfer to the Municipality), the legislation now requires annual approved Response Time Performance Plans (RTPP) broken out for sudden cardiac arrest and Canadian Triage Acuity Scale (CTAS) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 patients requiring emergency responses.

CTAS is an international medical triage standard utilized by hospitals, ambulance communication services and paramedics to identify how urgently a patient requires medical care.



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Specifically, in providing performance plans and reports to the ministry, each municipality must report on:

- The percentage of times that sudden cardiac arrest patients received assistance from a person equipped to provide defibrillation (e.g., paramedic, fire, police, or other first responder) **within six minutes from the notification of a call by an ambulance communication service.**
- The percentage of times that an ambulance crew has arrived on-scene to provide ambulance services to sudden cardiac arrest patients or other patients categorized as CTAS 1 **within eight minutes of the time notice is received respecting such services.**
- The percentage of times that a paramedic arrived at the location of a patient determined to be CTAS 2, 3, 4, 5 within a period of time **determined appropriate by the municipality.**

All municipal RTPP's are posted on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care public website (www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ehs/land/responsetime.html) and are to be accompanied by performance results for the previous year.

Municipalities may adjust individual performance plans at will, subject to timely notification of the Ministry. Annually, and no later than October 1st, municipalities are required to approve their Response Time Performance Plans for the upcoming calendar year and submit the plan to the Ministry by October 31st.

Analysis

The number one priority of Peterborough County/City Paramedic Service (PCCP) is to provide the best possible prehospital clinical care to the residents and visitors of Peterborough County and City and to do so in the most effective and efficient method possible. To achieve this, PCCP administration continually analyses paramedic service call volumes, response times and other key performance indicators.

With respect to the RTPP, PCCP focuses particularly on response time data in relation to the targets set out within the plan. A summary of this data is provided in Table 1 below. Based on a review of performance targets and achievements, PCCP Administration has maintained or exceeded the response time targets set out within the plan while implementing several deployment adjustments over the past several years in an effort to consistently meet those targets. These deployment strategies have included:



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- In 2019, enhanced coverage with the previously seasonal deployment car now 12 months of the year – 6 months in Buckhorn and off-season back in the City of Peterborough.
- During COVID-19 added pressures, the service added a 1000-2200 vehicle to assist with longer calls due to COVID precautions and increased call volume. In 2023 Peterborough decided to retain this vehicle in service as Offload Delay pressures continue to increase putting added pressures on staff.
- In 2020, 3 Community Paramedic programs put in place to relieve 911 system pressures
- 2024, anticipated completion of building a joint base in Cavan Monaghan with their Fire department to ensure coverage in their rapidly growing municipality.
- Continue working with local Counties for cross border solutions

The result of these deployment strategies initially resulted in significantly improving response times on the highest acuity level responses as evidenced by the performance in 2019 and earlier. However, increasing call volume and other system pressures such as COVID Pandemic and ongoing offload delays have served to adversely affect response time performance in more recent years; we are seeing response time performance deteriorating (while still meeting plan). In 2023, to date, we are seeing a 5% decline in call volume with Offload Delay increasing to 47% tying up crews.

Response time trends in 2022 and 2023 are indicating further lengthening of response times. To mitigate these trends, PCCP has increased Paramedic Staffing in 2022 and 2023 with an additional 2 12-hour shifts; the full impact of these enhancements is yet to be fully realized and evaluated.

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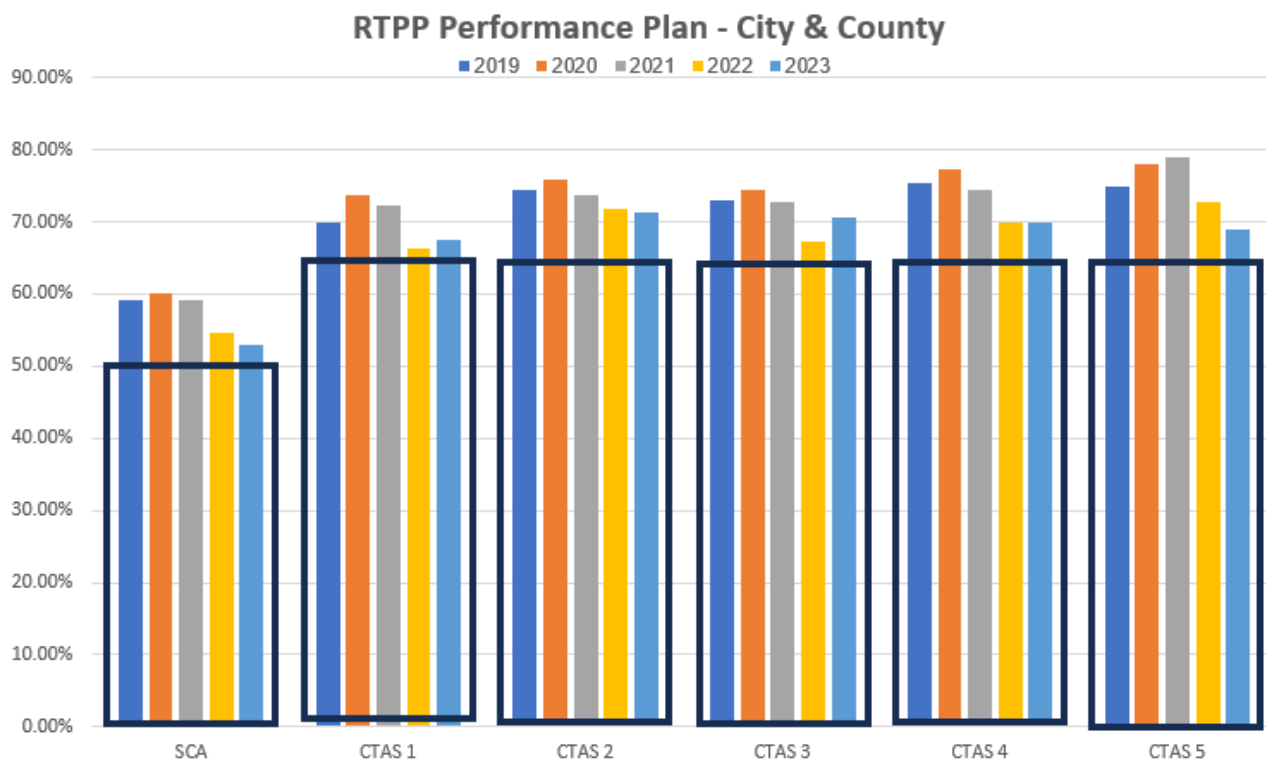


Figure 1: (2023 data: January 1 to July 31, 2023)

In addition to the mandatory response time analysis for the City and County as a whole, PCCP is also capturing and monitoring performance within urban and rural settings and in each municipal boundary. These performance measures were provided to Council and PRLC in our annual Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Reports starting in 2022. In addition to the mandated RTPP, the additional Operational Key Performance Indicators continue to guide deployment and resource strategies.

In summary, PCCP remains committed to continual analysis of performance and seeks system improvement opportunities. Current operating conditions and trends suggest that the proposed response time targets remain reasonable and attainable and the previously approved service enhancements have enabled PCCP to meet targets effectively and efficiently. Therefore, administration recommends maintaining the response time targets as set out and previously endorsed by Peterborough Regional Liaison Committee and County Council and the submission of the 2024 RTPP (Attachment 1).



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Financial Impact

No additional costs are anticipated

Anticipated Impacts on Local and/or First Nations Communities

None

Alignment to County of Peterborough Strategic Plan Priorities

To provide high quality services to residents, businesses and Townships:

Communications – To elevate the County of Peterborough’s profile, enhance community engagement, and communicate proactively.

Financial Responsibility – To ensure evidence-informed planning and approaches to achieve financial sustainability and accountability, while keeping ratepayers top of mind.

Infrastructure – To efficiently address current infrastructure demands, while maintaining the vision and planning necessary to meet future needs.

In consultation with:

1. Sheridan Graham, CAO
2. Patricia Bromfield, Deputy Chief Operations

Communication Completed/required:

To be shared with PRLC at the September 21, 2023, meeting.

Attachments

2023-09-13-Peterborough Paramedics Response Time Plan 2024.pdf

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Mellow
Chief of Paramedics

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