

August 19, 2022

The Hon. Sylvia Jones, Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
College Park, 5th Floor
777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Via Email
Sylvia.Jones@pc.ola.org

Dear Hon. Minister Jones,

Re: County of Essex AMO Delegation – Code Black - Solving the EMS Offload Delay Crisis

On behalf of the County of Essex we would like to thank you for the Ministry of Health's time during the AMO conference to hear our delegation regarding solving the offload delay crisis in congested hospitals in Essex-Windsor and across the entire province.

Paramedics province-wide are spending too much time in ambulances idling outside of emergency rooms, instead of being on the road responding to emergency calls. These "offload delays" are caused by rules requiring Paramedics to remain with their patients until the patients have been admitted to the hospital, which can last 12 hours or more. They have a cascading impact on the health care system, often resulting in Code Blacks – when there are no local ambulances available to immediately respond to emergency calls.

Offload delays are an inefficient use of precious Paramedic resources and an obvious and ongoing risk to public safety. They have a negative impact on Paramedic morale and public faith in the system, the quality of emergency care and the use of precious tax dollars.

This problem can only be solved through provincial leadership and province-wide action. The province needs to recognize offload delays as a public safety risk and set clear expectations with hospitals that offload delays are unacceptable.

As discussed in our delegation with the Ministry of Health, the province can emulate successes in New Brunswick and Quebec, where there is a culture that places a priority on having Paramedics on the road, by implementing several targeted measures:

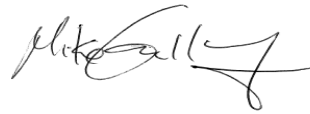
- Create incentives for hospitals to meet 30-minute offload targets and enforce consequences for those that fail to meet the targets.
- Require hospitals to triage patients brought in by Paramedics as a first priority – every time.
- Implement Fit-to-Sit programs: Allow low acuity patients brought in by ambulance to go to the waiting room so Paramedics can get back on the road.
- Require hospitals to take a whole-hospital approach and develop escalation plans mobilizing all levels of the hospital to deal with emergency department surges and offload delays.
- Create standardized measurements and reporting between hospitals and paramedics to ensure consistent and accurate data collection to inform decisions.

As the Land Ambulance service provider to the entire Essex-Windsor region, the County of Essex understands the value of an integrated approach to healthcare delivery. Together, we believe this initiative will achieve a significant impact in moving the health and well-being of people and Paramedics across the province.

Yours truly,



Gary McNamara
Warden



Mike Galloway, MBA, CMO
Chief Administrative Officer

CC: The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario (doug.fordco@pc.ola.org)
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