

Paramedic Services Update – December 2021

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Prepared by: Paul Kadwell
Community Safety

Recommended by: General Manager of Community Safety

Report Summary

This report provides information regarding the recent business activities, relevant statistics and good news stories within the Paramedic Services Division, Community Safety Department.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to operational matters and has no direct connection to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

This report aims to provide the City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Services Committee with an update on activities, relevant statistics, and recent performance measures within the Paramedic Services Division of the Community Safety Department.

Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services is responsible for the delivery of a performance-based paramedic service that complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, ensuring safe and quality pre-hospital emergency medical care and transportation for those individuals suffering injury or illness. A performance-based paramedic service focuses on clinical excellence, response time performance, patient outcomes, patient satisfaction, continuous quality improvement, and a healthy work environment conducive to professional growth.

Paramedic Operations

Facility Dog Program

Over the past number of years, programs such as fitness, medical and mental health services have been provided to promote values of personal health through education, training and prevention for our Community Safety staff. These programs have focused on supporting the mental health for frontline responders as mental health and occupational stress injuries continue to be a concern in the emergency first responder

community. One program that Community Safety reviewed was obtaining a Facility Dog as an additional option for preventative mental health support. The benefits of a Facility Dog include: acting as an icebreaker for difficult conversations, acting as a tool for those who struggle to communicate, aiding in physical, social, and emotional healing, providing a healthy and positive distraction to upsetting matters, providing the physical comfort for struggling employees, enhancing motivation and aid in the healing process by improving mental health and overall wellbeing, reducing heart rate and blood pressure, providing an overall calming influence to those who may be highly agitated or highly emotional, helping to normalize traumatic situations and enhancing feelings of safety and wellbeing.

On September 26, 2021, Community Safety acquired our Facility Dog, Neely, from National Service Dog (NSD). Neely was bred for service and at eight weeks was sent to a puppy raiser where she attended weekly puppy classes with NSD trainers to learn basic obedience and skills. Neely's puppy raiser introduced her to every potential environment possible and she went everywhere with her puppy raiser. Neely entered NSD University at approximately 18 months of age and attended daily training with advanced trainers for six months. Neely was assessed on an ongoing basis and was chosen as Canine-Assisted Intervention (CAI) dog.

Neely's Community Safety handlers (primary and secondary) attended NSD for three days to learn how to appropriately handle Neely. Over the next few months, Neely will require the assistance from her handlers to adjust to the workplace. Putting in the work now will lead to a long successful career for Neely, providing assistance to Community Safety staff for years to come.

Employer Provincial COVID-19 Antigen Screening Program

Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services participated in an employer voluntary antigen screening pilot led by the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario, and Ontario Health. The objective of the pilot was to assess the value of rapid antigen testing utilizing the Abbott Panbio brand antigen test as a screening tool to support employee safety and business continuity in a variety of workplaces. Following the pilot, a Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP) was introduced. The objective of the PASP is to provide rapid antigen testing utilizing the Abbott Panbio brand antigen test as a screening tool to support employee safety and business continuity in a variety of workplaces. The PASP is a voluntary longer-term project providing employers in priority settings to add an additional safety measure in high-risk and essential workplaces and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Paramedic staff are voluntarily tested for COVID-19 prior to shift commencement up to three times per week or when indicated. Results of the antigen tests are provided within fifteen minutes following test completion.

Paramedic Services commenced with PASP on April 6, 2021 and continue with our routine COVID-19 pre-shift screening practice. As of October 15, 2021, 839 PASP tests have been conducted on paramedic staff and all have indicated a negative antigen result. This project will continue until March 31, 2022, when the agreement expires with the Ministry of Health.

Screening for COVID

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and Emergency Health Services Branch (EHSB) is responsible under the Ambulance Act for publishing standards for patient care, documentation, safety, equipment requirements and transportation. These requirements are outlined in various paramedic practice documents: Standards, Training Bulletins, Manuals and Guides. During this pandemic, the EHSB has been updating COVID-19 Screening Tools for paramedics and Ambulance Communication Officers (ACO) as new knowledge is discovered about COVID-19. The ACO performs the initial COVID-19 screening of all 911 calls. Paramedics are advised of the outcome from the ACO screening, and with this information, paramedics then don the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required to protect themselves. Additional measures have been put in place to protect responding paramedics. These include instructions the ACO provides to the callers to not approach the paramedics when they arrive, instructions for all those present to wear a mask, and to follow responding paramedic's instructions to maintain distancing. On arrival, paramedics also complete a second screening. The outcome of this screening further supports the decision of which level of PPE is to be used for patient care. The COVID-19 screening tool was updated on August 26, 2021 to reflect

the latest definitions and advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario.

Sudbury Memorial Park Outbreak Support

Public Health Sudbury and District declared an outbreak at the Memorial Park encampment on October 12, 2021. In support of this group, Paramedic Services collaborated with the Sudbury and District Nurse Practitioners Clinic, Public Health Sudbury and District, multiple City agencies, and Reseau Access to help this population.

Paramedic Services conducted 63 on-site surveillance swabs on October 14, 23 swabs on October 20 and 10 swabs on October 27. In addition, Paramedic Services staffed a mobile ID Now (point of care test) in which a paramedic walked throughout the area on October 26 performing an additional 14 swabs. During this time our paramedics also responded to numerous first response calls and handed out Naloxone kits to those in need.

Expanded Ontario Naloxone Program

In December 2020, Sudbury Paramedic Services commenced participation in the Ontario Naloxone Program in collaboration with Public Health Sudbury and Districts (PHSD). This program has paramedics not only administering Naloxone as part of their standard paramedic care, but also distributing Naloxone kits to identified individuals where appropriate in the course of their duties or when requested from the public. This program permits 24/7 access to Naloxone in Sudbury, which was not previously available. This important initiative allows paramedics to promote harm reduction for those who misuse drugs with a goal of improving positive health outcomes in the community.

Since the implementation of this program on December 12, 2020, paramedics have distributed 329 Naloxone kits and continue to support those in need.

Paramedic Services Performance Measures Defined

Paramedic Calls for Service

A measure of calls received by Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services by the Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC) to respond to emergencies. In simpler terms, the number of calls to 911 for Paramedic Services that resulted in Paramedics being dispatched.

Paramedic Unit Responses

A measure of units dispatched by the CACC to paramedics to service emergencies. This number will typically be higher than calls for service as some calls necessitate the use of multiple ambulances, Paramedic Response Units, or Platoon Superintendent Units.

Paramedic Patients Transported

A measure of patients being transported on both an emergency and non-emergency basis (Table 1).

Requests for Service	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2021	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2020	Year over Year
EMS Calls for Service	24,937	22,031	+ 2,906 Increase of 13.2%
EMS Unit Response	30,534	26,565	+ 3,969 Increase of 15%
EMS Patients Transported	17,408	15,342	+ 2,066 Increase of 13.5%

Table 1. Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services Statistics

Logistics

Personal Protective Equipment

During the COVID-19 pandemic, inventory levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are being monitored to ensure all staff have the proper equipment to work safely. The Logistics staff continue to coordinate the procurement of supplies to ensure PPE levels are maintained and available to meet current demands.

Medical Supply Chain Challenges

Throughout the pandemic the supply chain for medical supplies has been disrupted. Early in the pandemic Paramedic Services anticipated a potential impact of medical supply availability. To mitigate the potential risk, large quantities of medical supplies were ordered early in the pandemic. Having this large quantity of medical supplies on hand ensures that we are compliant with the Emergency Vehicle Equipment Standards set out by the Ministry of Health.

Many brands and types of medications are also frequently back ordered or placed on allocations that only permit purchasing a maximum monthly quantity. To address the allocations and back orders we continue to maintain an adequate vendor pool and place our orders, on average, four to five days earlier than we have in the past.

There is currently a shortage of available new vehicles affecting the delivery time of purchased front line ambulances and SUV's. The vehicle shortage has resulted in increased vehicle maintenance to our aging fleet of front-line vehicles in order to meet our daily emergency vehicle deployment requirements. .

Logistics Staffing

We are currently in the final process of hiring three part-time Logistics personnel to accommodate the added responsibilities from the expansion of the Community Paramedic (CP) Program. The additional part-time staff will be responsible for checking and cleaning the additional CP vehicles and assisting the regularly scheduled Emergency Vehicle Technicians with their assigned duties throughout the shift.

Professional Standards

Professional Standards is responsible for the delivery of quality assurance programming, consisting of clinical and service delivery auditing to improve patient safety and ensure high-quality clinical care, thereby reducing risks. Professional Standards also manages the electronic patient care record system and quality assurance. Clinical events are monitored and evaluated to identify training and education opportunities for the paramedics.

Reported number of clinical events:

Cardiac	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2021	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2020	Year over Year
Number of calls with at least 1- 12 Lead Acquired	3,669	2,888	+ 781 Increase of 27%
Total Cardiac related	1,134	947	+ 187 Increase of 19.8%
Number of STEMI **	83	80	+3 Increase of 3.8%

*** A STEMI is a specific type of heart attack, which can be diagnosed by Paramedics in the pre-hospital setting.*

Neurological	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2021	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2020	Year over Year
Total Neuro-related	1,999	1,598	+ 401 Increase of 25.1%
Number of Acute Stroke ** (FAST positive, timeline criteria met)	185	141	+44 Increase of 31.2%

*** An Acute Stroke Patient qualifies for specific time-sensitive treatments from the hospital to reduce and reverse damage caused by stroke.*

Sepsis	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2021	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2020	Year over Year
Number of Identified Sepsis cases **	123	129	-6 Decrease of 4.7%

***A Suspected Sepsis Patient meets a specific criteria (qSOFA) used to identify patients at risk of death due to systemic infection.*

Cardiac Arrest Medical and Trauma	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2021	Jan 1 – Oct 15, 2020	Year over Year
Total Cardiac Arrest, Medical and Traumatic	321	342	-21 Decrease of 6.1%
Total Treated Cardiac Arrest Medical and Traumatic	149	160	-11 Decrease of 6.9%
Number of Medical Arrest with Return of Spontaneous Circulation at any time while in Paramedic Care.	33	45	-12 Decrease of 26.7%

Training

Paramedic Training Officers (PTOs) continue to address training needs and deliver real-time training and support to staff where needed with a specific focus on infection, prevention, and control. The PTOs continue to review COVID-19 safe work practices with all staff as they assist in the maintenance of keeping these practices and procedures in line with the most current standards.

The Training Section will be conducting new hire orientation for the three new Equipment Vehicle Technicians within the next few weeks. The PTOs have also completed the launch of the mentorship designed to assist the recent new hires into their role. They will continue to provide the mentorship program for future employees.

The PTOs have also been working with the Community Paramedic (CP) Program in collaboration with an outside agency to provide various levels of training available to the quickly expanding CP Program and its newest staff. As well they have developed and assigned the training for the 2021-2022 influenza vaccine in order for the CP program to administer this year's influenza vaccine to their clients.

The PTOs are currently delivering the fall training curriculum to all front-line paramedics. The agenda includes relevant information such as service updates, Unconscious Bias in the Prehospital Setting, the Lucas CPR device, introduction to Neely our Facility Dog and Hydro Safety for First Responders. During the training sessions, medics are also completing their annual CPR recertification, receive the influenza vaccine for those who consent, and fit testing for N95 masks.

Once again, this year's students from College Boreal, Cambrian College and Canadian Career College (CTS) will be on placement with paramedics as part of their school program. The Canadian Career College (CTS) will have five students starting their preceptorship in mid-October ending in January. Starting in mid-January, the PTOs will assign six PCP and six ACP students from Cambrian and six PCP students from College Boreal to Paramedic Services preceptors. The PTOs review student requirements while on placement along with safe work practices.

The PTOs have also issued Ministry of Health mandatory training to all staff, including the 2021 - 2022 Influenza Training Bulletin and WorkSafe Bulletin – Winter Driving Tips via ABSORB LMS.