

## Association of Municipalities of Ontario Health Transformation Task Force

Presented To: Community and  
Emergency Services  
Committee

---

Meeting Date: April 22, 2024

---

Type: Correspondence for  
Information Only

---

Prepared by: Melissa Roney  
Community Safety

---

Recommended by: General Manager of  
Community Safety

---

## Report Summary

This report provides information regarding increasing challenges related to provincial human health resources in paramedic services and the work of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Health Transformation Task Force together with the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs to address these staffing issues.

## 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 & Emissions Plan.

## Financial Implications

There are not financial implication associated with this report.

## Background

AMO has heard from members and partner organizations across the province that it is becoming increasingly challenging to attract and retain an adequate health care workforce in municipal health services as well as the broader health sector. Resolving health human resources issues would be a significant step towards improving access to health services in communities across the province including right here in Greater Sudbury. AMO is advocating for a provincial sector-wide health human resources strategy with a goal of producing a robust workforce to improve access to health services across the province.

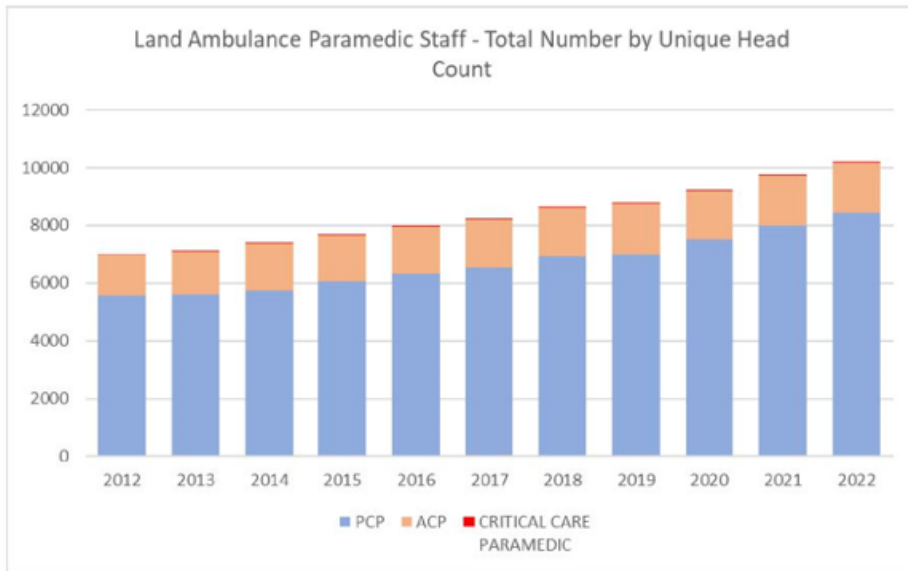
Paramedicine is not immune to these growing health human resource challenges. The Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC), the leading authority for paramedicine design and delivery in Ontario, has identified human health resources as one of their top three strategic priorities in 2024 in response to staffing pressures seen around the province. OAPC has completed a historical and projected growth analysis as part of their strategy deployment. These results can be found below.

## Historical and Projected Growth

As seen in Figure 1 the average annual growth of land ambulance paramedic staff is 3.8% while cumulative

growth is 45% (3,160 paramedics). In 2024, the province will need 400 new paramedics in addition to what is required to replace the loss due to attrition.

Figure 1. Historical Growth



OAPC – HHR AMO Health Transformation Task Force Report 2023

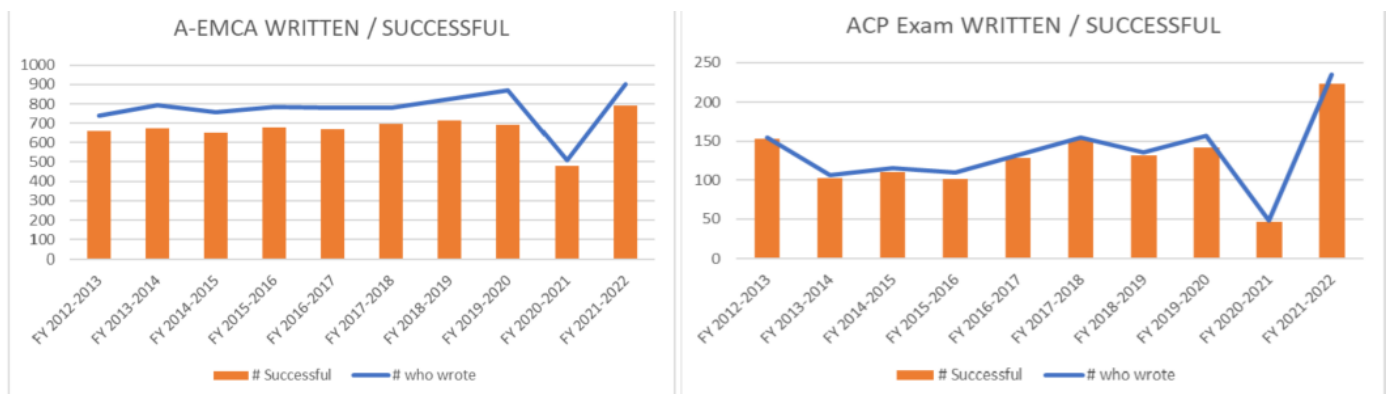
### College Educational Capacity

Paramedic Programs are offered in 19 colleges throughout Ontario. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities reports their attrition rate in the paramedic program ranges from 37-91%. In response to provincial paramedic shortages the province announced funding of 300 new paramedic program seats this past August, however this will take 2-3 years to see results. In addition, the Ministry of Health/Ministry of Colleges and Universities launched the Learn and Stay Program. This program provides tuition reimbursement in six northern based community colleges and private business colleges, including the three colleges located in Greater Sudbury, with an expectation that graduates remain working in the north for up to 2 years.

### Certifications

Graduates from both the Primary and Advanced Care Paramedic Programs become eligible to work following successful completion of the provincial certification exam. The A-EMCA written exam is a proxy for the number of new graduates annually. Annual values can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2. New Paramedic Certifications



OAPC – HHR AMO Health Transformation Task Force Report 2023

On average, 775 paramedic program graduates attempted the provincial exam annually and were successful 87% of the time.

## Paramedic Development & Requirement Mismatch

Paramedic service growth, attrition, occupational stress injuries, and the shortfall of new graduates are all contributing factors resulting in a staffing supply and demand mismatch. A provincial scan completed by OAPC anticipates the need of 1,100-1,200 new paramedics annually as demonstrated in Figure 3. Annual growth will require approximately 350 new paramedics annually in addition to the 840 paramedics required to replace staff who retire or are predicted to make career changes and leave the profession.

The colleges anticipate providing approximately 670-700 new paramedics annually for the next 2 years resulting in a shortfall of 300-400 paramedics each year.

Figure 3. Provincial Staffing Shortfalls and Planning

<b>Current Staffing Shortfalls and Planning</b>	
<p>2023 – <b>Needed 1,388</b> - <b>Hired 997</b> – <b>Short 391</b>            2024 – <b>Anticipate need for 1,414 New Hires</b></p>	
<p><b>Northern Zone</b>  <small>(78% of Services Reporting)</small></p> <p><b>2023 Need – 205</b>  <b>2023 Actual – 99</b></p> <p><b>2024 Plan – 200</b></p>	<p><b>Eastern Zone</b>  <small>(100% of Services Reporting)</small></p> <p><b>2023 Need – 271</b>  <b>2023 Actual – 216</b></p> <p><b>2024 Plan - 257</b></p>
<p><b>Southwest Zone</b>  <small>(89% of Services Reporting)</small></p> <p><b>2023 Need – 436</b>  <b>2023 Actual – 316</b></p> <p><b>2024 Plan - 351</b></p>	<p><b>Central Zone</b>  <small>(82% of Services Reporting)</small></p> <p><b>2023 Need – 476</b>  <b>2023 Actual – 366</b></p> <p><b>2024 Plan - 606</b></p>

OAPC – HHR AMO Health Transformation Task Force Report 2023

Staffing shortfalls result in significant service delivery impacts. For example, services are forced to down staff, reduce their level of care, convert on site reporting stations to on call, and resort to a high reliance on overtime to address these scheduling challenges. These impacts lead to increased sick time, mental health illnesses, increase in response times, occasional reliance for operational support from neighbouring municipalities and an inability to respond to surges in emergency call volumes. In addition to the operational impacts, some paramedic services in the province are forced to divert staff from specialty programs such as Community Paramedicine which is demonstrating to be a highly cost effective community health program supporting our aging population and reducing 911 call volume.

In response to these pressures, together with stakeholders AMO’s Health Transformation Task Force has identified the following themes that should guide the development of a provincial, sector-wide human health resources strategy of which municipalities should support or be a part of:

- Compensation – support and funding for health care settings.
- Mental Health and Well-Being – support for mental health should be available for all health care workers.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – to meet the needs of Ontario’s diverse population, there should be

measures undertaken to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce.

- Immigration – remove barriers for workers trained outside of the province to practice in Ontario.
- Education and Training – extend training and education programs.
- Human Resources Planning Tools – supports for the health care sector including toolkits to support service and capacity planning.
- Return to Work Incentives – attract workers who have left the sector to return through campaigns and incentives.

## **Local Recruitment and Employee Retention Initiatives**

Greater Sudbury Paramedic Services staffing remains stable however we are proactively engaging in employee retention and recruitment initiatives which include:

- Collaborating with Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development – workforce planning for Sudbury & Manitoulin to shape policies and programs to ensure a skilled, adaptable and competitive workforce will meet the needs of our Paramedic Service. Such initiatives they support us with include working with high schools and post-secondary institutions to increase awareness regarding paramedicine as a career pathway, and connecting with the lead of the rural northern immigration pilot to assess any international talent that may have a health related background and assess interest in a career as a paramedic.
- Conduct bi-annual recruitments to address growth that we project in our Community Paramedic Section.
- Attend job fairs both in the north and south to promote our service.
- Support paramedic training by supporting college student preceptorship. We participate in the training of approximately thirty students per year. These student often seek employment with our service following graduation.
- Support innovation – paramedics are interested in training and working to the level of Advanced Care. We are one of only two ACP services in the northeast. Our Tactical and Community Paramedic Programs also attract paramedic graduates.
- Promote and support professional development - our service offers career advancement through promotions, leadership roles and specialized assignments. In addition we offer specialized training programs with most training being financially supported.
- Maintain competitive remuneration for our paramedics.