

## Request for Decision

### Linen Services for Emergency Medical Services

Presented To: Community Services  
Committee

Presented: Monday, Aug 12, 2013

Report Date Tuesday, Jul 30, 2013

Type: Managers' Reports

#### Recommendation

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury authorize the City's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division to continue with the annual purchasing of linens and laundry services from Sudbury Hospital Services (SHS).

#### Finance Implications

The purchase of linen and laundry services from Sudbury Hospital Services is funded within the existing EMS operating budget.

## Executive Summary

Emergency Medical Services seeks Council authorization to maintain linen services with Sudbury Hospital Services (SHS) for the purchase of linen and laundry services required by City of Greater Sudbury Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This includes dedicated hamper service so to recapture all EMS soiled laundry within the hospital system, process all bedding linens, provide unique identification stamping and delivery of fresh linen in quantities required to maintain services in all seasons and or conditions.

## Background

EMS requires linen and laundry services to ensure each patient is provided with clean, fresh linen (i.e. sheets, blankets, pillow cases, etc., with every call for emergency medical services). In addition, linen must be properly folded, packed for delivery, and restocked on a timely basis.

In health care, laundering linens properly and safely is a special task governed by CSA standards for reusable patient textiles\*. Often linens are contaminated with bodily fluids and must be properly laundered to ensure there are no cross contamination risks. Sudbury Hospital Services (SHS) manage their linen and laundry services on a large scale through a mixture of in-house processes and services. SHS handles this work on a large scale with trained staff and proper facilities.

Sudbury Hospital Services (SHS):

#### Signed By

##### **Division Review**

Joseph Nicholls  
Deputy Chief of Emergency Services  
*Digitally Signed Jul 30, 13*

##### **Recommended by the Department**

Tim Beadman  
Chief of Emergency Services  
*Digitally Signed Jul 30, 13*

##### **Recommended by the C.A.O.**

Doug Nadorozny  
Chief Administrative Officer  
*Digitally Signed Jul 31, 13*

SHS is a not-for-profit organization, technically a corporation without share capital. SHS has been in business since 1970, servicing CGS EMS as well as other EMS providers in the area, including Health Sciences North (HSN) and St Joseph's Continuing Care.

ISO certified (9001-2008), SHS adheres to CSA standard Z314.10-03 with all linens processed at their plant, using a 3-step sanitation process to protect against biological cross contamination: 1) dilution, 2) chemical, 3) temperature. Additionally, the plant uses positive air pressure storage with clean stock and negative air pressure with soiled, enhancing protection against cross contamination. Furthermore, workers are protected with barrier walls from soiled linen preventing potential cross contamination.

In 2012, 43,000 kg of linens were processed and shipped to EMS. Our current rate for processing linens is \$2.98/kg. SHS sources and purchases replacement linens on our behalf with no mark up. In 2012, the cost of laundering, repairing and replacing linen was \$137,528 at an average cost of \$11,460 monthly.

### **Benefits of HSN Standardization**

SHS has extended their expertise with the City's EMS Division for many years, where linen servicing has become streamlined and seamless:

1. SHS provides service to HSN; for this reason, immediately after transporting and transferring patients at the hospital, Paramedics have direct access to soiled laundry hampers so to dispose of soiled linens and open access to a maintained stock of fresh linens prior to returning to service without delay. Important note, this system allows SHS to recapture all our soiled linen, securing these tangible assets within the system.
2. Externally, EMS Headquarters receives regular deliveries of folded, packed and bagged linen in quantities appropriate to meet the needs during summer and winter seasons, including specially prepared airport transportation bundles only EMS requires. Furthermore, SHS provides lightweight aluminum storage racks on wheels, allowing mobile storage and management of linens by our technical group.
3. SHS is capable of supplying emergency access to large quantities of linens should the need arise.
4. As public institutions, hospitals have high accountability, standards, and safeguards to ensure quality service is delivered. SHS provides service to HSN in part of their quality patient care.
5. The provision of these services by SHS continues to meet the operational requirements of EMS where linen purchasing and laundry services existed since year 2000 and those years prior to the City's land ambulance assumption.
6. Partnering with our public hospital, colleagues within CGS and using combined buying power to provide cost-efficient services allows EMS to leverage this synergy.

If SHS did not provide linen services, a new system for separate linen processing would be required with significant planning and resources to be put into place, the challenges to Greater Sudbury EMS include:

1. Re-stamping/identifying of existing linen so not to be diverted to SHS for processing and subsequent charges.
2. Purchase of new collection hampers for hospital and all EMS sites.
3. Development of new processes to recapture soiled linen. A labour intensive process where Paramedics would be required to retrieve linen from under patients immediately after transportation to hospital. A practice that is inefficient; and furthermore, requires additional lifting and strain on the Paramedic, potentially increasing job related injuries.
4. Containing used linen in EMS vehicles is problematic due to space constraints and infection control.
5. Additional costs would be incurred for delivery, storage, and collection requirements.

### **Conclusion**

Continuing established services with SHS is the preferred option as it leverages existing supply, distribution, collection and cleaning processes without duplicating parallel services. This will negate additional costs to maintain infrastructure to distribute and recapture both clean and soiled linen separate from the hospital system.

SHS has the expertise and the economies of scale to provide essential linen services to the City of Greater Sudbury EMS. An accountable, stable institution providing service levels to HSN as set by industry standard.

The products and services supplied by SHS continue to meet the operational requirements of EMS. It is recommended that the City of Greater Sudbury continue linen services with SHS as outlined in this report.

*\*Canadian Standards Association (2003). CSA Z314.10-03 Selection, Use, Maintenance & Laundering of Reusable Textile Wrappers, Surgical Gowns and Drapes for Health Care Facilities. Toronto: Author.*