

Nick Desclouds  
Primary Care Paramedic  
President, CUPE Local 5191

Members of Region Council,  
150 Frederick Street  
Kitchener, ON  
N2G 4J3

**Subject: Parity for Paramedics**

Dear Regional Councillors,

I am writing to you on behalf of the dedicated paramedics at the Region of Waterloo, represented by CUPE Local 5191, to propose a crucial adjustment to the compensation rates for our workforce. Our members are on the front lines every day, safeguarding the health and well-being of our community with unwavering commitment and professionalism.

Over the past years, the demands on the paramedic profession have escalated significantly, not only in call volume but also in the complexity in which we care for our community. Paramedics have seen an increase in scope of practice, which involves acquiring new skills and administering additional medications. The development of our profession relies on continuing medical education to maintain a high level of practice, which allows us to provide quality service to members of the community who require critical care. Despite these increased demands, the compensation rates for our paramedics have not seen a corresponding adjustment, impacting the morale and sustainability of our workforce.

Current compensation rates impact the paramedic workforce because of the wage disparity among allied agencies. Primary Care Paramedic hourly wages are 22.5% behind local Fire services and 20.8% behind Regional Police. In addition, due to a recent arbitration, our wages are now 8% behind Ambulance Communications Officers; those that dispatch us to emergency calls.

Ambulance Communications Officers serve an important role in deploying resources, but should a dispatcher be paid more than a frontline paramedic? Paramedics face unpredictable, sometimes dangerous, working conditions, often in a down-staffed work environment.

A paramedic's scope of practice is steadily increasing to support the community. The profession continues to evolve past the point where paramedics simply provide emergency transport to the hospital. Cardiac arrests, motor vehicle fatalities, childbirth, strokes, heart attacks and the opioid crisis continue to be a vital portion of our job.

Today, in 2024, we support palliative care patients who wish to stay home, elderly citizens struggling with navigating the health care system and also supporting the unhoused. Paramedics continue to be the leading authority on all calls where lives are at risk, taking control of the scene and delegating tasks to police and fire.

The Paramedic profession already struggles with career longevity; and wages this far behind Police, Fire and now Ambulance Communications Officers will continue to make this worse. We are seeing paramedics leave our profession to pursue careers in Police and Fire simply because the wage gap is so significant. Police and Fire never switch into Paramedics. Financial support through wellness initiatives, the peer support program, funding the high growth scenario and increasing staffing have improved operations, but failing to recognize a wage that is anything less than an Ambulance Communications Officer will negatively impact recruitment and retention.

We urge you to commit to increasing Paramedic Services funding in order to facilitate a modest and fair compensation for paramedics. A wage increase will show all paramedics how valued they truly are, and would help foster our vision of a resilient and future-ready organization. Together, we can continue our mission of growing with care.

Thank you for considering this vital matter. We look forward to your support, and I am available at your convenience to discuss this proposal further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Desclouds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nick" being more prominent.

Nick Desclouds  
Region of Waterloo Primary Care Paramedic  
President, CUPE Local 5191