

**Region of Waterloo**

**Public Health and Paramedic Services**

**Paramedic Services**

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**To:** Community and Health Services Committee

**Meeting Date:** April 9, 2024

**Report Title:** Paramedic Services 2023 Community Paramedicine Program

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**1. Recommendation**

For Information.

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an annual update on the Community Paramedicine Program's activities in 2023.

Community Paramedics work in a non-emergency role delivering service to clients in our Region. Through regular check-ups, health education, and in-home assessments, we strive to support clients while helping them navigate the most appropriate care pathway.

Provincial funding guidelines mandate Community Paramedics to provide targeted care to senior populations in the two branches below:

- Base Programming - helping clients live their best while remaining in place. This includes system navigation as well as health education and in-home assessments.
- Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care (CPLTC) - this branch supports individuals who are currently or soon to be waitlisted for Long-Term Care (LTC) placement. This also includes individuals who require Crisis Placement.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

The activities of the Community Paramedicine program align with the Equitable Services & Opportunities strategic priority for the Region of Waterloo: Through collaboration and innovative design, we will provide equitable, accessible services across Waterloo Region that support the social determinants of health, safety, and complete communities as we grow.

#### **4. Report Highlights:**

- Of the Program referrals received in 2023, 1,048 came from our front-line Paramedics who identified patients living at risk or requiring services. Through system navigation, Community Paramedics were able to connect many of these individuals to the best resources to meet their needs.
- Last year, over 250 individuals received ongoing support from the Community Paramedic Team through home and virtual visits.
- As of December 2023, our Program provided support to 170 individuals awaiting placement in Long-Term Care facilities. On average, an additional 50 clients are supported at any given time via remote patient monitoring.
- Community Paramedics can identify and fulfill the needs of individuals by addressing their unique situations pertaining to health, well-being, and safety. This can have a significant impact on many socio-economic factors related to the social determinants of health.
- With Program expansion to a 24/7 delivery model in 2024, it is anticipated that our client base will continue to grow and expand. This year will see our Team begin point-of-care-testing, allowing lab work and urinalysis to be completed without the need for patients to leave home. In addition, we look forward to exploring a rotational clinic model to support eligible clients living in Regional Housing locations.
- The goal of these combined efforts is to reduce hallway medicine while easing the ever-increasing pressures on Paramedic Services. Providing in-home support for clients aims to minimize reliance on 911 for services.
- Findings from the September 2023 Provincial Evaluation of the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care (CPLTC) Program for Fiscal Year 2022/23 indicated that 911 calls province-wide decreased by 22-32% among all Community Paramedicine clients and by 20-32% among Community Paramedicine clients with one or more chronic medical condition. This supports our mandate and demonstrates the benefit of providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

#### **5. Background:**

The Community Paramedic Program in the Region of Waterloo has been operating since September 2018. The Program is referral-based, supported by local hospitals and Emergency Departments; family physicians and health care teams; community agencies; and specialty care providers. A considerable number of referrals come directly from our Paramedics when encountering clients in the 911 environment who

require additional care and support. Services we provide include:

- Non-emergency home visits
- Health Education and Disease Management
- Remote Patient Monitoring
- In-home safety assessments
- System Navigation and connection to appropriate service providers
- Medication Reconciliation
- Support to patients wishing for a palliative approach to care
- Access to Programs to support healthy living

## **6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public**

### **Area Municipalities:**

The Community Paramedic Program has fostered many relationships with key partners and agencies in our Region. We continue to identify individuals at risk and in need of additional support.

### **Public:**

The MOHLTC recently shared the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care (CPLTC) Program Evaluation based on Fiscal Year 2022/23. The feedback was positive and data demonstrates the significant impact of the CPLTC Program province-wide. High levels of satisfaction were reported through client surveys, including those from the Region of Waterloo (see Appendix A).

## **7. Financial Implications:**

The Region of Waterloo's Community Paramedic Program is 100% funded through the Province of Ontario. The 2023 approved Regional Operating Budget included:

- \$251K of Community Paramedic Funding from Ontario Health West.
- \$2,9M of Community Paramedic-Long Term Care (CPLTC) Funding from the Ministry of Long-Term Care. This funding was extended until March 31, 2024.

In 2023, a provincial budget announcement pledged continued support for the Community Paramedic-Long Term Care (CPLTC) stream and additional base funding from Ontario Health West was also received as follows:

- A funding letter was received from Ontario Health West indicating an incremental \$129K of base funding to further expand the program. An additional increase in for 2023/24 in the amount of \$13K was also recently announced as a top-up, and

will be included in 2024/25 as additional base funding.

- A funding letter from the Ministry of Long-Term Care has been received that confirms funding of up to \$3M for both 2024/25 and 2025/26, to continue operation of the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care (CPLTC) program.

## **8. Conclusion / Next Steps:**

Community Paramedic staff look forward to carrying out the program to respond to the growing needs in our community, all while ensuring a positive patient, caregiver, and provider experience.

## **9. Attachments:**

Appendix A - Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care Executive Summary

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