
2006 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE - Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - Revenue Generation Potential

Issue:

The potential for Toronto Emergency Medical Services (TEMS) to generate revenue through a charge-back and/or an increase in the charge of fees to City and other agencies, and the public, for the preparation and issuance of various reports and documents from its Professional Standards Unit.

Background:

At its January 12, 2006 meeting, the Community Services Committee requested that the Chief / General Manager of Toronto EMS submit a briefing note to the Budget Advisory Committee regarding the potential revenue that might be generated from processing requests for documentation from Toronto EMS.

Toronto EMS receives several hundred requests annually for the production of reports or documents related to emergency medical responses. Requests come from patients, police services (City and Provincial), allied agencies, hospitals, insurance adjusters and legal firms. These reports include Ambulance Call Reports (patient records), Incident Reports, audio recordings, and various statement and interview records.

TEMS charges a fee for each request based on cost recovery. The structure of fees has been established consistent with current similar practices among other EMS providers in the country and the average time required by City employees in completing each request. This process was last reviewed in 2001.

During the review of potential revenue generation, the following key factors were considered:

- the fees currently charged by EMS services across Canada
- the fees currently charged by other organizations for similar reports
- the wages of Supervisors/Paramedics and Clerical staff when establishing cost recovery/revenue generation, including 2006 COLA
- policies and Acts governing policing agencies throughout Ontario, including Toronto Police Services, and their right to acquire records and statements without financial consequences.
- review of the requirements of specific patients, where documentation is mandatory to complete the health care chain (Statutory Declaration), and development of a customer service approach when establishing fee structures.

At present, City Services such as Toronto Police and TTC are not charged for record reproduction. Based on current fee structures, only marginal revenues are recovered, generally in the range of approximately \$2,580 per year. With the inclusion of internal City agencies in the charge-back structure and an overall increase in the current fees, the estimated yearly revenue could rise to as high as \$23,000, or possibly higher, depending on the size of any increase.

However, Toronto EMS does not recommend that the present fee framework be altered, for the following reasons:

1. Charging City agencies (e.g. Toronto Police, TTC) will only increase those agencies' operating costs, and they will in turn have to find the money from within, or seek funding increases from the City. Charging for this service will be the equivalent of creating Inter-Departmental Charges. While EMS revenue may increase, overall City costs may increase also.
2. There are citizens who, legally or otherwise, require the types of documents produced by Toronto EMS' Professional Standards Unit. Some of these individuals are not in a position to be able to afford to pay significant amounts for the reports, thus they might find the 'user fee' onerous.
3. Establishing a charge for City agencies who have not previously had to pay, and increasing the cost for others, will require additional administrative resources which Toronto EMS does not have at the present time.
4. Toronto EMS would be concerned if it starts charging fees to agencies from whom it also gets reports, lest those agencies also begin charging fees for documents they provide. In this case, any revenues gained may be offset by an increase in its own related expenditures.

The potential revenues which might be realized though the charging of fees for documentation prepared in Toronto EMS' Professional Standards Unit is marginal, and would have minimal impact on Toronto EMS' overall budgetary pressures. At the same time, altering the present fee framework may invite other issues that neutralize any fee benefits.

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