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2012 BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

Toronto Emergency Medical Services – Impact of Hiring Deferral on Critical Call Response Times 2012 and 2013

Issue/Background:

At the Budget Committee Meeting of December 5, 2011 Toronto EMS was asked to provide a report regarding the impact of a proposed hiring deferral of Paramedics on response times in 2012 and 2013.

Key Points:

- EMS averages an attrition rate of 3 paramedics per month or 36 paramedics per year. In May each year when paramedics graduate from college, EMS conducts a hiring class (to hire approximately 30-40 paramedics) to maintain its full paramedic complement by year-end.
- Given the City's financial situation, a reduction of \$2.219 million gross and \$1.110 million net is recommended to defer hiring of paramedics in 2012. The deferred hiring of paramedics will result in the equivalent of 36 paramedic positions being held vacant towards the end of 2012.
- Each month the paramedic complement is expected to shrink by 3 paramedics through attrition. As the year progresses EMS will have to adjust car counts to address the shortfall. By December 2012 it is expected that Toronto EMS will have 36 vacant paramedic positions which will require EMS to reduce the available ambulances by an equivalent of 6.5 ambulances on a 24-hour period. The decreased vehicle count will reduce the availability of ambulances for emergency calls.
- The Ministry of Health and Long Term care (MOHLTC) requires all EMS service providers to achieve its ambulance response time performance (time to arrive at life threatening emergencies within 8:59 minutes) achieved in 1996. In 2011 EMS met the response standard to critical emergency calls 62.9% of the time versus the 1996 level of 84%. EMS believes that a hiring deferral will negatively impact critical call response times, as a result, we project that the 8:59 response time standard will only be achieved 60% of the time in 2012.
- If the hiring deferral were to continue into 2013, EMS would expect a further deterioration of response times.

- Council directed reviews will be undertaken during 2012 which include a Fire/EMS Efficiency Study. Pending the outcome of this review the deferred hiring service level change could be impacted.
- Toronto EMS expects the results of the Efficiency Review to address all factors impacting response times.

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