

**Presentation to Audit Committee
on July 5th, 2024
Agenda Item AU5.6**

**AUDITOR
GENERAL**

TORONTO

Toronto Paramedic Services – Rising Response Times Caused by Staffing Challenges and Pressures in the Healthcare System

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Presentation Overview

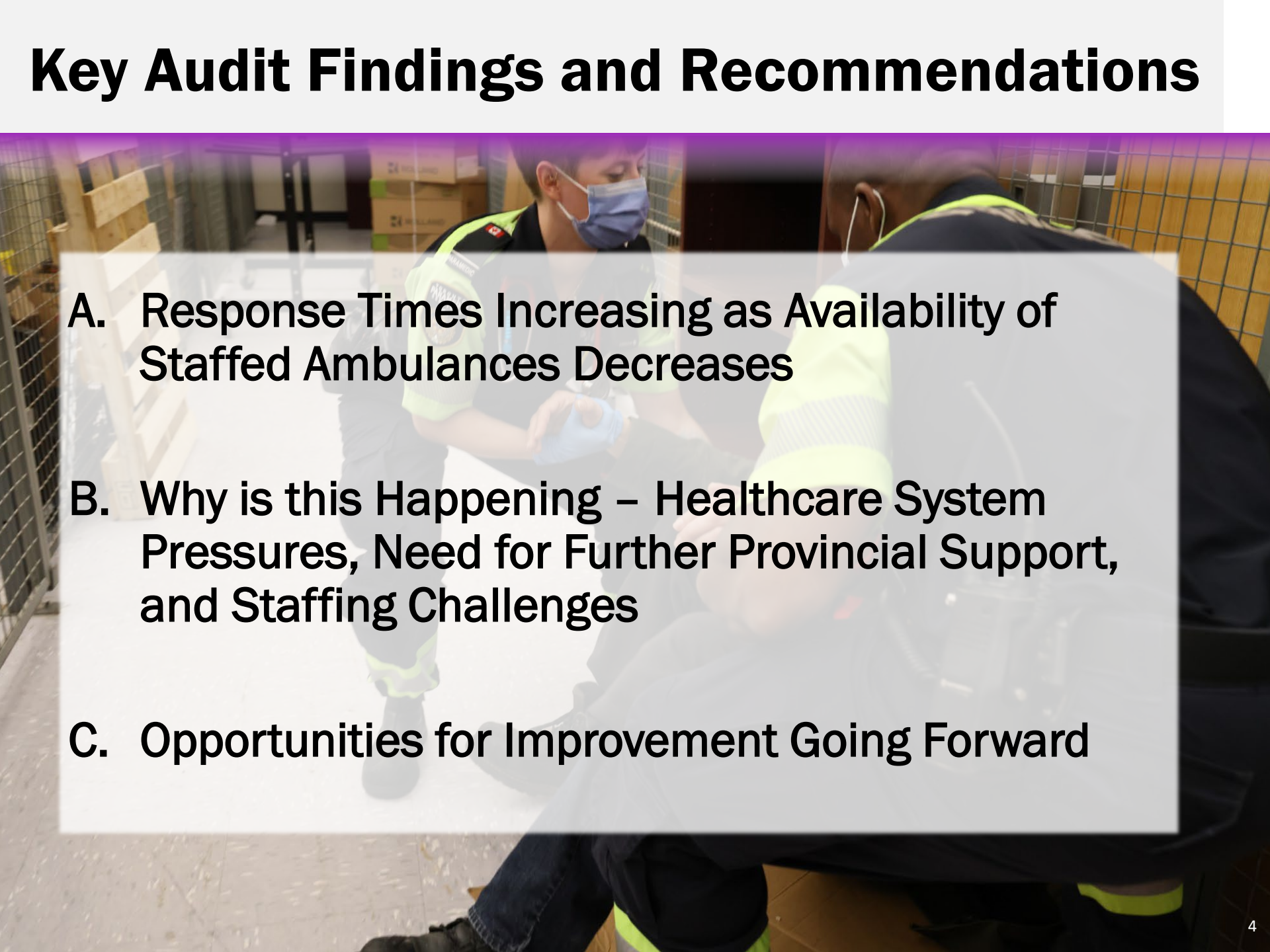
- Why this Audit Matters
- Audit Objectives
- Key Audit Findings
- Recommendations



Audit Objectives

1. Is Toronto Paramedic Services meeting its legislated and internally approved targets for providing a **timely emergency response** to persons requesting ambulance service?
2. Is Toronto Paramedic Services **effectively measuring, monitoring, and reporting on how well it meets its targets and using these results to inform management decisions?**
3. Are there **opportunities** for Toronto Paramedic Services to **optimize its use of resources**, including the use of vehicles and staff, to improve its performance and response time?

Key Audit Findings and Recommendations

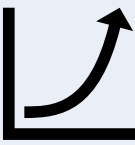
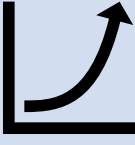
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- A. Response Times Increasing as Availability of Staffed Ambulances Decreases
- B. Why is this Happening – Healthcare System Pressures, Need for Further Provincial Support, and Staffing Challenges
- C. Opportunities for Improvement Going Forward

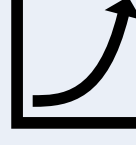
A. Response Times Increasing

Patient Acuity Level*	Average Ambulance Response Time in 2023 (mm:ss)	% Increase from 2019 to 2023	Average Dispatch Response Time in 2023 (mm:ss)	% Increase from 2019 to 2023	Average Overall Response Time in 2023 (mm:ss)	% Increase from 2019 to 2023
Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)	06:00	5%	01:52	10%	7:52	6%
CTAS 1	06:47	7%	02:30	35%	9:17	14%
CTAS 2	09:27	26%	03:07	51%	12:34	31%
CTAS 3	15:07	24%	06:56	40%	22:03	29%
CTAS 4	15:37	19%	07:17	37%	22:54	24%
CTAS 5	14:11	13%	05:53	30%	20:04	18%

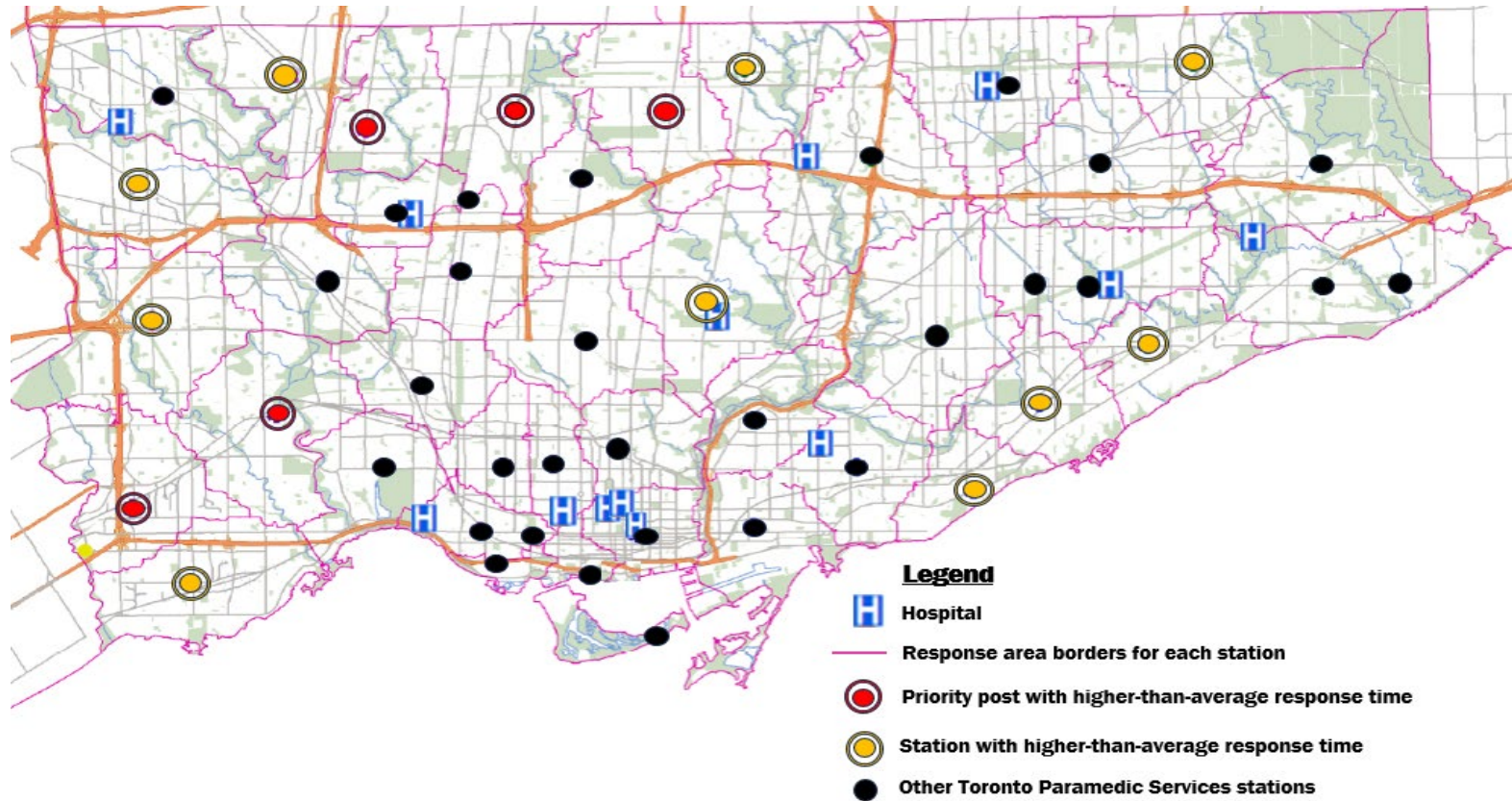
Sudden cardiac arrest and CTAS 1 are the most severe and CTAS 5 is the least severe.

A. Availability of Staffed Ambulances Decreases

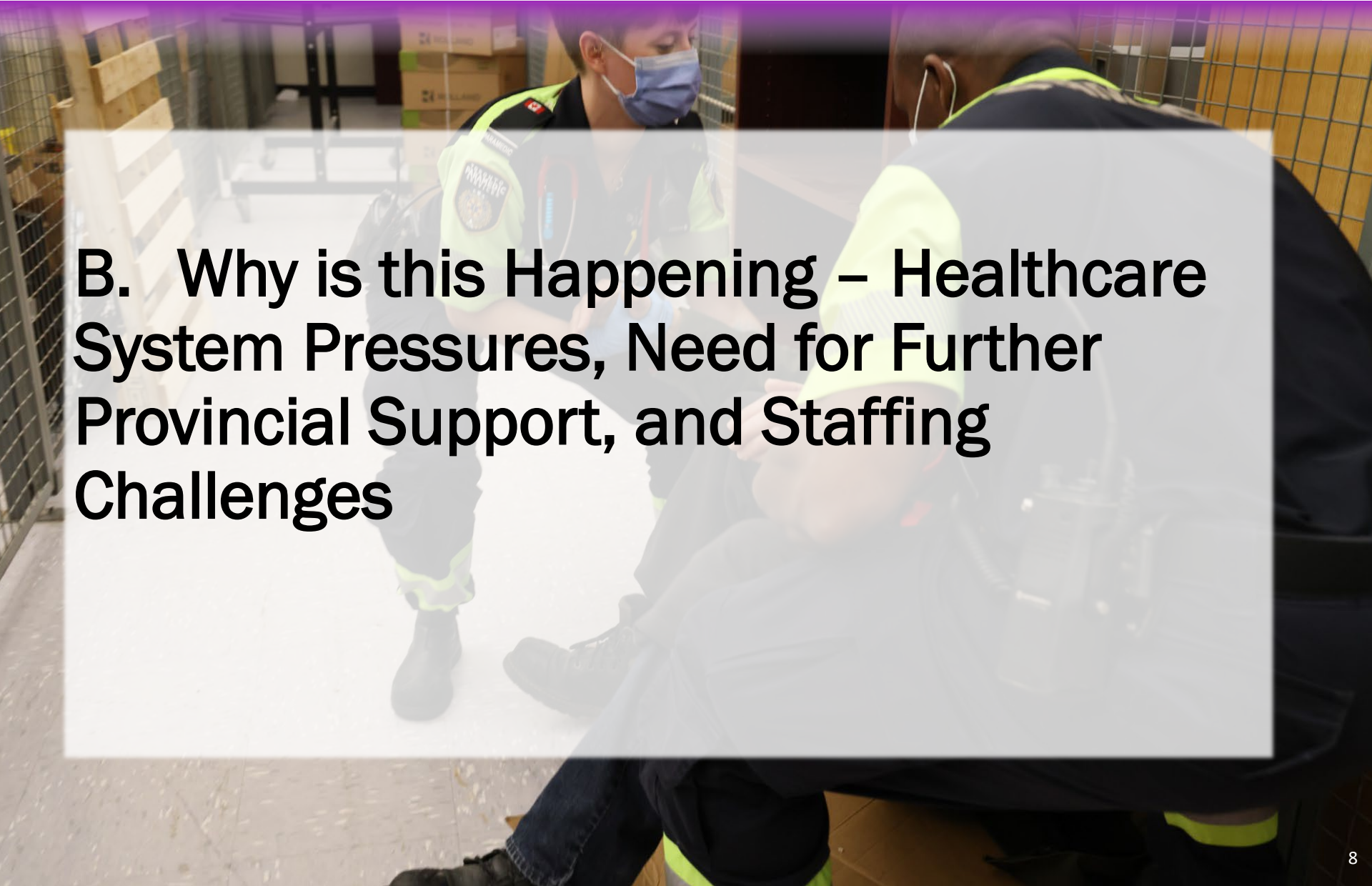
5 or less available ambulances			
Year	2019	2023	Trend
Frequency (episode)	1,300	6,800	
Duration/episode (minutes)	4	8	

Zero available ambulance			
Year	2019	2023	Trend
Frequency (episode)	29	1,200	
Duration/episode (minutes)	2	2	Consistent

A. Varying Response Times Across The City

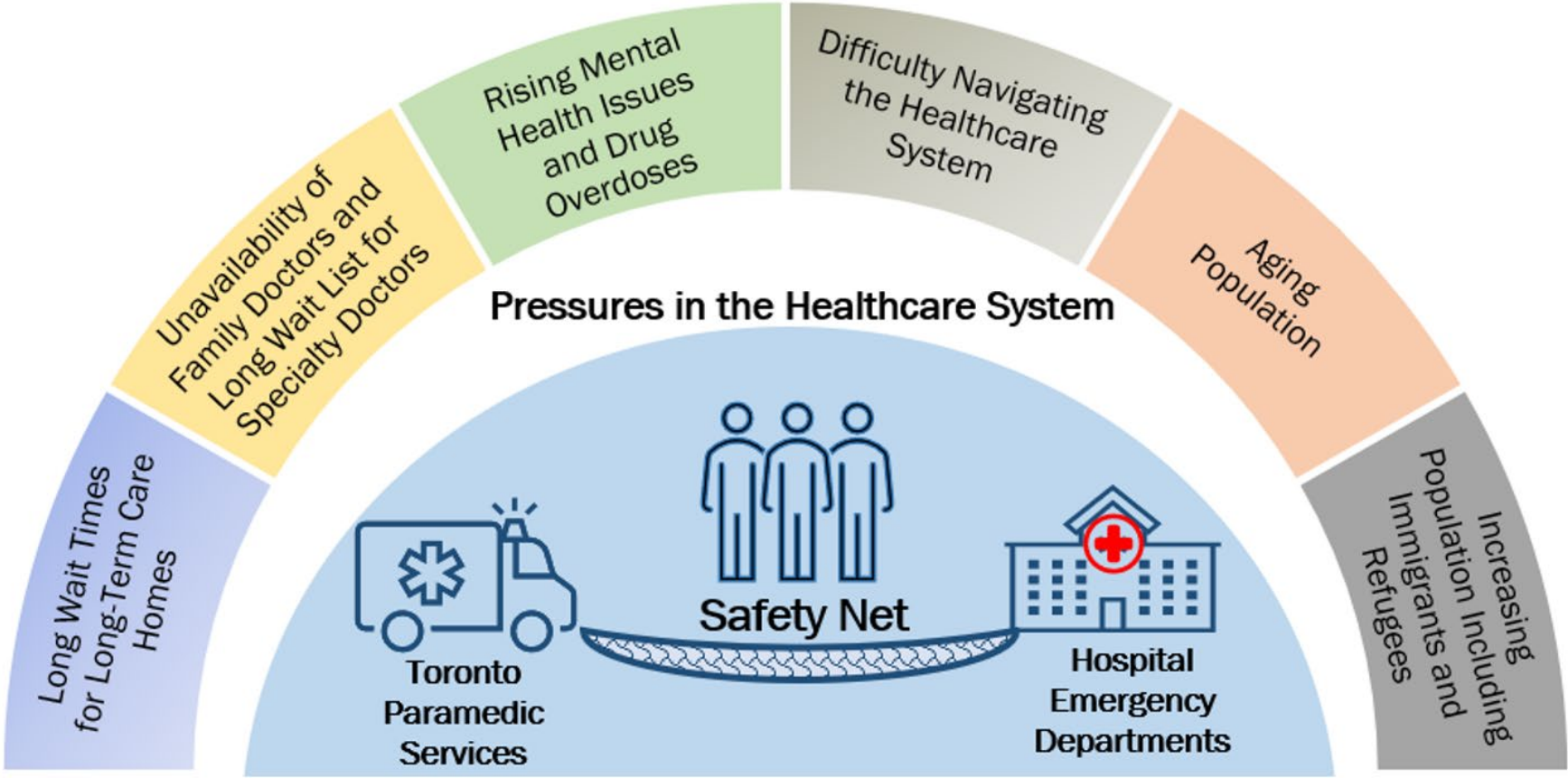


Key Audit Findings and Recommendations

The background image shows two individuals in a warehouse or storage area. One person, on the left, is wearing a blue surgical mask and a high-visibility yellow safety vest over a dark uniform. They are looking towards the right. The second person, on the right, is seen from the back, wearing a dark jacket with a high-visibility yellow stripe on the sleeve. They appear to be in conversation. The setting includes wooden pallets and metal shelving units in the background.

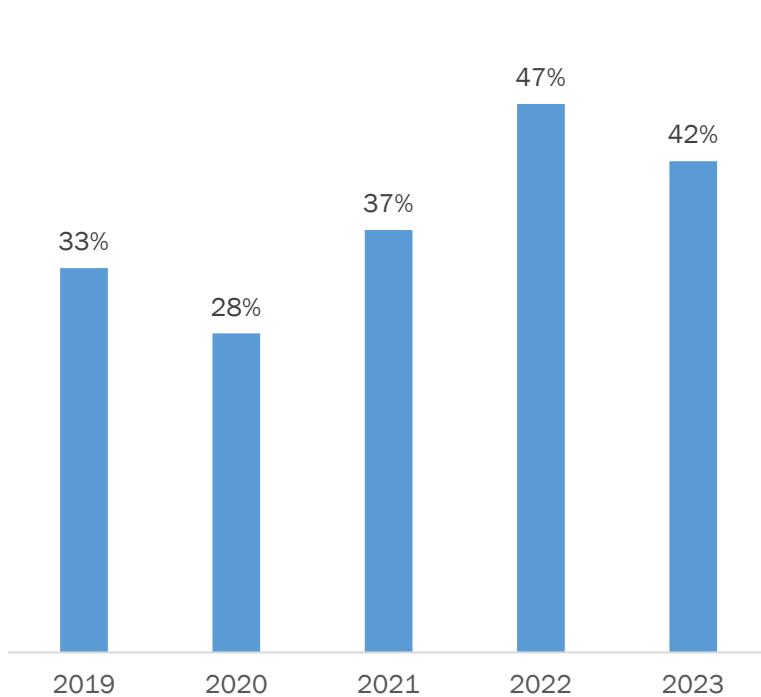
B. Why is this Happening – Healthcare System Pressures, Need for Further Provincial Support, and Staffing Challenges

B. Pressures in the Healthcare System

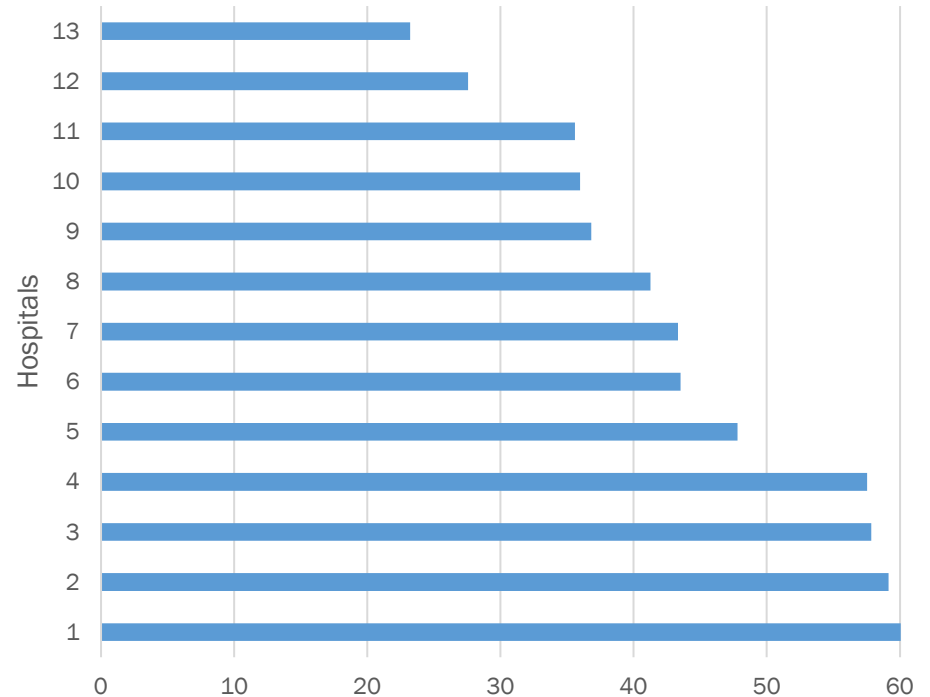


B. Offload Delays

Percentage of Time that Patient Offload Took Longer Than 30 Minutes, (2019 to 2023)



Average Wait Time to Offload Patient (in Minutes) by Hospital, 2022-2023

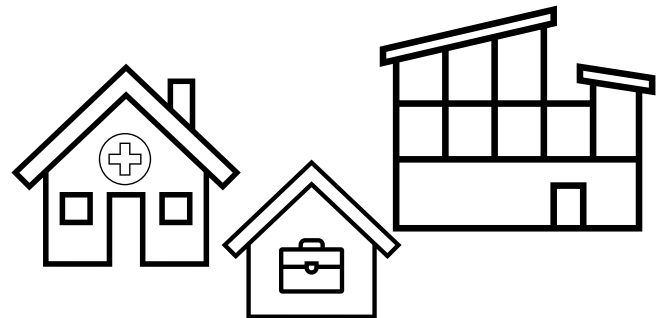


B. Need for Further Provincial Support

- Integrating healthcare in Ontario is needed for the Division to be able to implement new patient care models that reduce the number of patients transported to hospitals, alleviate the offload delays, and potentially better meet those patients' needs

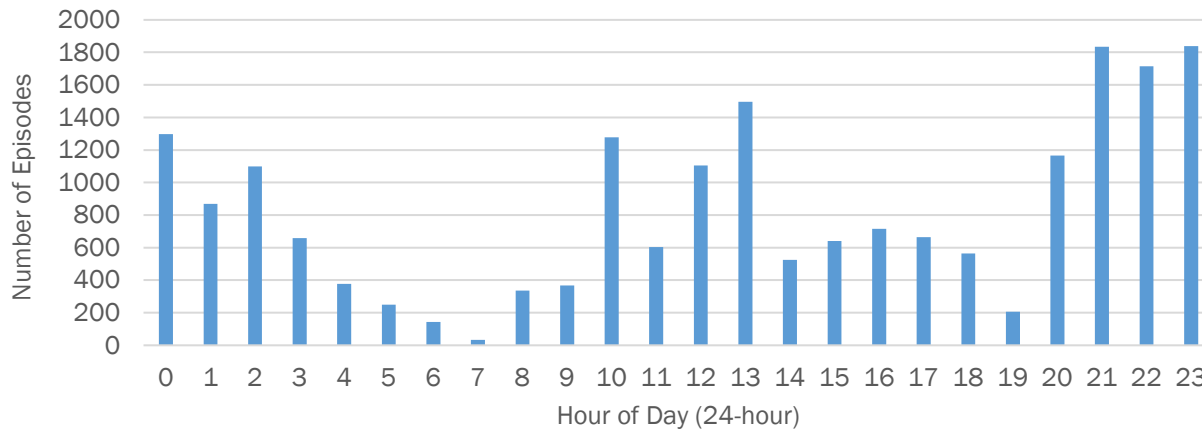
3 New Patient Care Models:

- Treat and Discharge (Implemented)
- Treat and Refer
- Alternate Destination

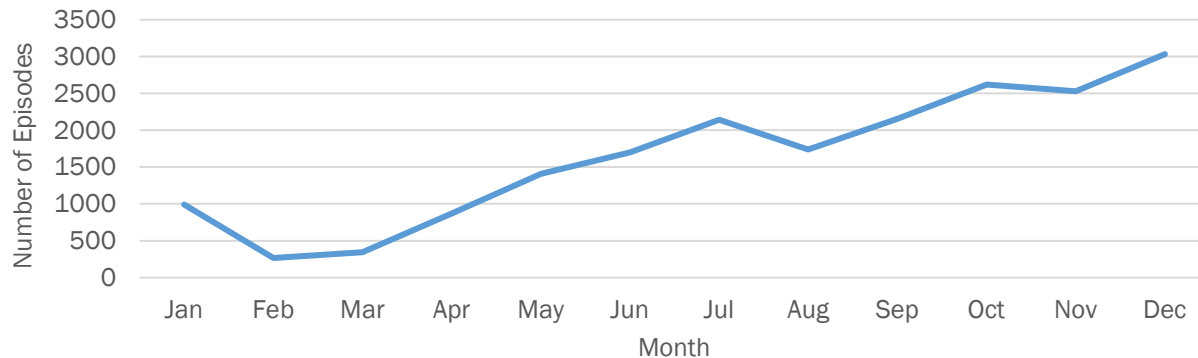


B. Staffing Challenges

Low availability of staffed ambulances more frequent on weekends and after 9 p.m. on weeknights

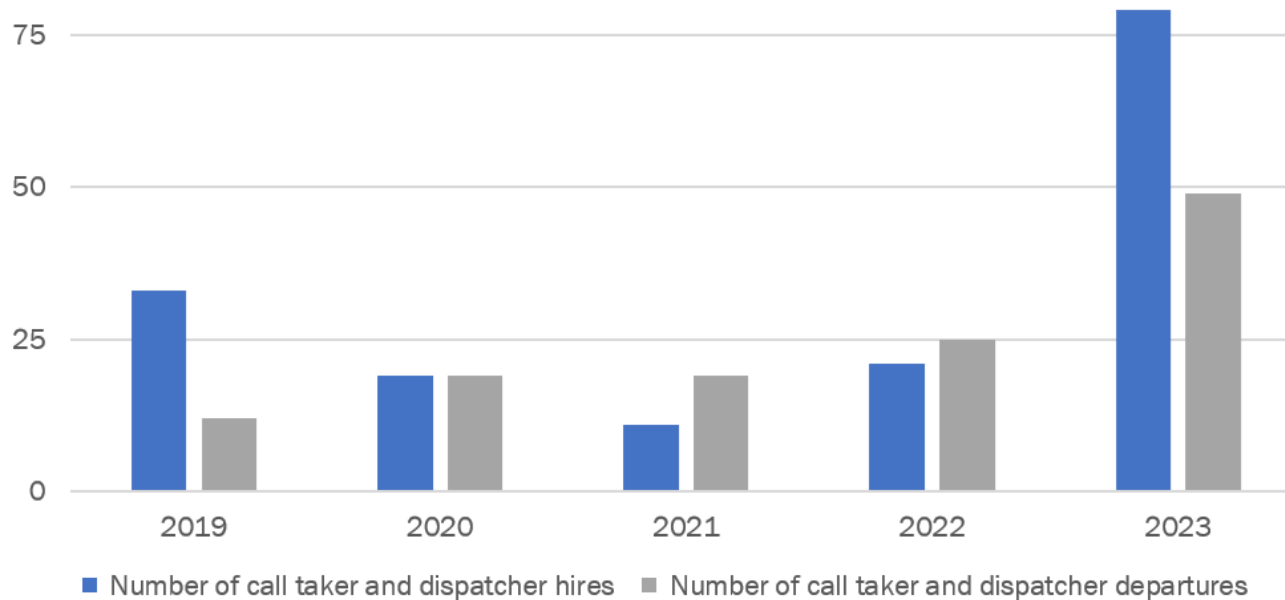


Low availability of staffed ambulances more frequent during late spring and summer months, continues to rise through fall and peaks in December



B. Staffing Challenges - Retention

- From 2019 to 2023, the staff turnover rate increased:
 - From 7% to 27% for call takers and dispatchers
 - From 5% to 8% for paramedics
- Hires versus Departures of Call Takers and Dispatchers



In 2023, 17 departures were resignations, and 24 departures were probationary discharges.

Key Audit Findings and Recommendations

A photograph of two police officers in a warehouse setting. Both officers are wearing high-visibility yellow-green vests over dark uniforms and blue face masks. They are standing on a light-colored floor, possibly concrete or tile, and appear to be in conversation. The background shows wooden pallets and metal shelving units. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'C. Opportunities for Improvement Going Forward'.

C. Opportunities for Improvement Going Forward

C. Opportunities for Improvement Going Forward

- Strategies to free up resources for higher acuity calls and better address low acuity calls



Mobile Integrated Healthcare



Registered Nurse at Ambulance Communications Centre

- Diverting some mental health calls in the future through its ongoing collaboration with Toronto Community Crisis Service



**Toronto
Community
Crisis Service**

C. Opportunities for Improvement Going Forward

- Enhancing frequent 9-1-1 user analysis to identify patients for community paramedicine programs and developing targeted public education to reduce call volume
- Determining the optimal level of ambulances required



234 - ambulance vehicles



126 - most scheduled for duty on any given day

10 Recommendations



Implementing the 10 recommendations in this report will assist Toronto Paramedic Services to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of its operations

Summary

1. Improve overall response times for higher acuity calls
2. Determine optimal staffing levels and better manage staffing to address peak times across the city
3. Implement innovative strategies to free up resources for higher acuity calls



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