

# Growing Better Together

## Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Offloading

### Our Ask

That the Ministry of Health

- Provide reimbursement for the \$1,755,466 permanent allocation for additional EMS crews in response to unplanned offload delay hours
- Work with Niagara Region to address underlying factors of offload delays, including
  - Establishing a task force to identify root causes
  - Supporting the expansion of primary care capacity by introducing an additional Family Health Team within the region

### Why is this Important?

Three of Niagara's hospitals consistently rank in the bottom quartile for offloading time. Between 2021-2022, Niagara experienced a nearly 55 per cent increase in offload delays, representing almost 34,000 hours in lost time. With Niagara estimated to grow to 694,000 residents by 2051 (43 per cent increase), creating a sustainable emergency care system is critical.

### Aligning with Provincial Priorities

Increasing access to patient-centred care supports the Province's Plan for Connected and Convenient Care. Specifically, it meets the goals of the Plan's second pillar to provide faster emergency care and increased paramedic and ambulance availability by reducing offload delays.



EMS incurred  
**33,908**  
of offload delay  
hours in 2022



Time lost due to  
offload delays equals  
**24**  
paramedics  
for 365 days



**\$1.7 Million**  
allocated from 2023  
Regional property  
taxes to address  
EMS needs

## Our Opportunity

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We appreciate the work the Province is doing to better emergency care in Niagara, including providing the Region with

- Funding for three additional Ambulance Communication Officers
- Greater flexibility in how Niagara hospitals can use Dedicated Offload Nurse Program funding
- \$587,500 one-time funding for the Emergency Communication Nurse program

Niagara continues to implement innovative programs that seek to reduce the impact of EMS call volumes, for example our

- Mobile Integrated Health Model of Care, which includes our Mental Health and Addictions Team that provides support without transporting patients to the Emergency Department 85 per cent of the time
- Emergency Communications Nurse Program
- Fit to Sit initiative, which originated in Niagara and is now used across the province

These contributions provide critically needed support to improve current service; however, more help is needed to create a sustainable emergency care system as Niagara's population continues to grow.

## Our Challenges

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- Between 2021 and 2022, there was a 54.76 per cent increase in offload delays. This equates to a loss of 24 paramedics for 365 days
- As of June 30, 2023, the Region has incurred a total of 12,163 offload delay hours

- \$1.7 million of Regional Levy has been permanently allocated to add additional EMS crews to mitigate the unexpected loss of ambulance hours resulting from these offload delays
- There are many factors contributing to Niagara's poor performance, such as Niagara's
  - Higher-than-average opioid-related death rate
  - Aging population
  - Rural communities
  - Increased residents suffering from poor mental health

## The Impact

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- Building on the investments the Ministry of Health and Niagara are making in emergency care will improve service delivery for years to come
- Reducing offload delays will build a sustainable EMS service and increase access to care
- Finding long-term solutions will save local and provincial tax dollars in the long run as emergency funding will no longer be required

### Contact Information

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Let's create an emergency care system that can support current and future residents. Let's Grow Better, Together.