TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT

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May 15, 2009

To: All municipalities in Ontario
Re: Request for simultaneous dispatch for Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and Fire Response

Council of the Township of South Stormont passed Resolution No. 94/2009 adopting a report (summarized below) requesting simultaneous dispatch for EMS and Fire Response. Your support and endorsement in this regard would be appreciated. Please send any resolution of support to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and your local MPP with a copy to the Township of South Stormont.

Summary of Recommendation:
That Council receive this Report, and instruct staff to forward a letter to our local MPP and lobby the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to provide a simultaneous EMS and Fire Dispatch.

Summary of Issues:
To provide a simultaneous Fire and EMS Dispatch:
- That the patient has a better chance of survival,
- To reduce unnecessary cost to the taxpayer,
- To reduce the risk of an accident when responding to a false alarm, and
- To eliminate the frustration that firefighters experience when being dispatched several minutes after the call was received.

Background / History
In the mid-nineties the South Stormont fire service entered into an agreement with base hospital to provide First Response with Defibrillators. The concept of this delivery service was designed for rapid intervention by deploying firefighters as first responders. Fire departments are strategically positioned especially in the rural areas to deliver a rapid emergency response. Under the current system, many fire departments are either not being dispatched, or they are being dispatched significantly later than the EMS Ambulance.

In 2008, the South Stormont Fire Service responded to a total of sixty six (66) EMS calls. Thirty (30) of the calls were either cancelled or the ambulance was already on scene requiring no assistance from the Fire Service. This is a clear example of the situation that is currently occurring daily across the Province. Failure to call the community fire department simultaneously, despite existing agreements to do so, compromises the public and severely hampers the fire service’s ability to provide rapid and effective emergency response. While not only being a frustrating situation for both the public and the firefighters this could also have a significant impact on a patient’s outcome.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association have drafted a “Discussion Paper” (Saving a life in 6.0 minutes or less by utilizing the efficiencies of the Ontario Fire Services) which explains the Winnipeg (Manitoba) Model where the emergency response system has Fire and EMS working closely together and reducing the response time in half. This is an excellent example of better utilization of community fire departments in emergency medical responses.

The Council of the Township of South Stormont appreciates your support in this regard.

Yours truly,
Betty de Haan, CMO
CAO/Clerk
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