



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Michael Maclsaac, Chief of EMS Robert Smith, Deputy Chief of EMS
Date:	November 25, 2015
Re:	LaCloche PRU Operationalization – Issue Report

Recommendation

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Program Planning Committee and the Board accepts this report as an update to potential alternative deployment models for the implementation of the 2016 EMS staffing enhancement of a Paramedic Response Unit (PRU) in the LaCloche region.

Background

In May 2015 the Board approved in principle the [EMS 5-Year Staffing Plan](#). Step one of the plan called for a PRU in Wikwemikong (which has since been approved by the MOHLTC at 100% provincial funding), while step two called for a PRU in Espanola and that was approved by the Board in the 2016 DSB budget.

The rationale to support the PRU included a substantial issue of “stacked” calls on Manitoulin Island and LaCloche. In other words, a considerable number of calls were occurring in those locations when the only resource within those locations was already on a call. Understanding that the review of “stacked” calls required a more global review of statistics on a number of geographically linked stations, the original report noted that,

“A number of factors were reviewed in coming to the decision that a PRU model would be most effective in meeting our current needs. PRU deployment has a benefit of response capacity without transportation. As such the resource cannot be utilized for non-urgent transfers, ensuring the availability and reliability of the resource for provision of response and treatment. Additionally, from a budgetary perspective, the PRU model costs half of a full ambulance in staffing dollars. The data analysis confirms that the addition of a PRU 7 days a week for 12 hours a day would be beneficial in Manitoulin and LaCloche regions.”

Current State of Operations in the LaCloche Region

Since budgetary approval for a 50% PRU program in Espanola, the DSB staff have been reviewing implementation possibilities within the required 50% approval. Additionally, management staff have become aware of an increasing employee satisfaction issue within the Noëlville and Massey stations.

The original guiding principle behind this model was that the PRU would be deployed from the Espanola station half of the time, with the PRU paramedics backfilling within the region for vacation, sick time, and lieu time the other 50% of the time. While entirely possible, this plan did present operational challenges.

Since the deployment of the 10-10-4 schedule in Noëlville and Massey, during the 2014 staffing enhancement there has been an increasing employee dissatisfaction with that schedule. This dissatisfaction increased given that operational pressures have resulted in an updated 5 year staffing plan that has moved the 24/7 Noëlville and Massey staffing plan further down in priority. Since 2014, the employer has engaged staff on the matter however there was no identified schedule that could accomplish all the original goals established at the point of implementation.

Operationalization Design

There has been much focus on the operationalization of the PRU since the budget was approved. It must be reiterated that the analysis completed within the 5-year plan lead to a conclusion that the communities would benefit from a PRU on Manitoulin and in LaCloche. When the report was initially written the deployment of the PRU in LaCloche was stated to be in Espanola. This was the case because the Espanola station is geographically more central, it has a larger stacked call issue than Massey, and the overall ability to backfill for time off on a 50% PRU is more optimal in Espanola. In assessing the actual deployment of the PRU, remembering the need was determined to be in LaCloche, it does not matter whether the PRU is deployed out of Espanola or Massey. The reality is this PRU is a much needed resource that is to be utilized when ambulances are not readily available. In other words, if the Espanola ambulance is busy the PRU will move to Espanola, and if the Massey ambulance is busy the PRU will move to Massey. In essence whether the unit is deployed at the start of shift in Espanola or Massey is irrelevant as it will move to where the need is once the need arises.

Deployment Options

With the challenges previously noted, administration has taken the opportunity to singularly review all current issues and has determined that there are potential options to deployment that were not originally apparent.

Option #1 – 50% PRU deployed from Espanola staffed with 2 paramedics 7 days a week covering time off of other employees 50% of the time. This was the original underlying plan used to determine the viability of implementing a 50% PRU program.

Option #2 – 50% PRU deployed from Espanola staffed with one paramedic 50% of the time. A modification of the original plan this would not require the backfill portion as this

PRU would be placed into service on the busiest days of service each week understanding that seven (7) twelve (12) hour shifts are available over a 2-week period.

Option #3 – 50% PRU deployed from Massey station integrating into the current Massey schedule with the same shift lengths allowing for the hiring of one additional paramedic and potentially improving the current Massey rotation.

Option #4 – 50% PRU deployed from Massey station integrating into the current Massey schedule with a change in shift start and end times allowing for the hiring of one additional paramedic and a potentially improving the current Massey rotation.

With the aim of engaging employees in solutions, a Labour Management Committee meeting was recently held to discuss some of the above noted possibilities. The discussions were highly effective and will continue to move forward with the goal of achieving the most positive outcome for all. There is still a need for further discussions at the Labour Management Committee in order to operationalize any of the options currently being considered or other options that may arise from conversations with staff.

Conclusion

DSB staff will continue to review all options in deployment with the aim of providing the most responsive public service possible. Staff will continue to move forward and implement the best possible option that meets the needs of the citizens the DSB serves.