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Improving our ambulance service

alling for an ambulance is certainly not a situation we want to find ourselves in. Then again, while the idea of dialing 9-1-1 for paramedics is frightening, it is also comforting to know that we have such an excellent service available to us.

As of August 16, Halton Region is fully responsible for land ambulance service. Our goal is to establish an ambulance service that will operate as an integral part of the emergency network.

There were a number of enhancements to Halton's ambulance services as we prepared to take over operations, including increasing the number of vehicles in the ambulance fleet. This has necessitated the hiring of additional paramedics, and at the same time we have upgraded their level of qualifications.

We now have 108 paramedics in the Halton Land Ambulance Services, of which 40 are trained at the Paramedic Level Two (PL2) meaning they have additional skills to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS). The result is that, for the first time, every Halton

THE REGION REPORT

Joyce Savoline

ambulance will have at least one ALS paramedic on board at all times. That's a big improvement for north Halton which in the past had none.

These advanced care paramedics are able to perform a number of controlled medical acts and provide a wider range of pre-hospital treatment options to patients. Equipment will be upgraded too, including new defibrillators, which should give heart attack patients a better chance for survival.

Another important accomplishment is the ratification of a collective agreement between Halton Region and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU, Local 207), the union that represents Halton Region

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Land Ambulance Services paramedics. The teamwork displayed between the union and the region throughout the talks will undoubtedly help us elevate and standardize the level of ambulance services across the Region.

And then there's the region's land ambulance station in Acton. We needed a new home because the original location on Churchill Rd. no longer met the needs of the service. Through a partnership with the Halton Hills Fire Department, land ambulance services will use space in the Acton Station on Churchill Rd: on a temporary basis until a new location in Acton is found. The good news is that the short distance between the new and old site will have no negative impact on response times.

As you can see, we've accomplished a lot since taking over land ambulance. Recruiting top quality staff, making vehicle and equipment enhancements, building a strong relationship with the union, and maintaining our partnership with our area municipalities will help us deliver this vital service to the community.

Acton

(519) 853-3580



