

# Offloading delays at hospital concerning

Could affect Halton EMS's response times

By Stephanie Thiessen  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Halton EMS's track record of quick response times might be in jeopardy if a systemic health-care issue that just recently hit Halton isn't resolved.

Hospital offloading delays have affected Halton's surrounding areas — as well as communities across Canada — for several years, but weren't an issue here until this past December.

Offloading delays occur when a hospital's at capacity and can't provide a bed for a patient brought in by ambulance. Paramedics must therefore continue providing care to the patient at the hospital, usually in the emergency department hallway, preventing the ambulance from leaving and being used for another emergency.

These delays and their impact on ambulance availability were discussed at Halton Region's health and social services committee recently, with a report submitted by staff and a presentation made by Greg Sage, manager of program development and quality improvement for Halton Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

"Our response times haven't been affected negatively thus far," Sage explained after the meeting. "The report's more to say the potential's

there."

A single offload delay can range anywhere from 30 minutes to four hours, Sage said, adding the average delay is

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Documents will be available for pick up on and after Tuesday April 17, 2007. There is a non-refundable deposit of \$26.50 (includes GST). Bidders who request documents to be shipped from the Purchasing Department must include a courier account number (the documents will be shipped collect) and a handling fee of \$10.60 (includes GST) for this service.

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Bids will be opened in public at 2:15 p.m. on the closing date specified in the Nelson Room at the above address. Those submitting bids are invited to attend.

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