

**County of
Peterborough**



Our History. Your Future.

Office of the Chief
Administrative Officer

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April 20th, 2009

Honourable David Caplan
Minister of Health and Long Term Care
80 Grosvenor Street
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister Caplan,

**RE: Status update regarding
County & City of Peterborough
Off-Load Nurse program and
Request for review of funding**

On behalf of the Warden of the County of Peterborough and EMS Management staff, I am writing to inform you of the current status of the Off-Load Nurse program, associated funding issues and to request an enhanced level of funding that would enable modifications to improve the efficiency and functionality of the program.

In 2008/09, the County of Peterborough received a financial allocation of \$125,000 to implement the Off-Load Nurse Pilot program.

In an attempt to maximize the availability of an off-load nurse in relation to EMS off-loading requirements, the Memorandum of Understanding negotiated between Peterborough EMS and the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) was to provide coverage for 8 hours per day – 7 days per week.

Due to a late start-up of the program in 2008, the funding agreement was amended to reflect costing of \$107,516.64 (included \$30,000 capital financing for 5 stretchers). Since the program start in mid-November of 2008, and up until December 31st of 2008, the PRHC was only able to provide coverage 50% of the time.

From January 1st of 2009 through to March 31st, 2009 inclusive, the off-load nurse was only provided 58% of the time. Since the financing agreement with your Ministry is based upon invoiced costs, the County was unable to utilize the full funding made available by the MOHLTC. Approximately \$42,000 of the 2008/09 approved funding was not utilized.

Equally as important as the funding, due to staffing issues the program was not operating as efficiently as desired and therefore not able to fully achieve the desired program objectives.

At the time of preparing the 2009/10 Business Case/funding request to the MOHLTC in February, it was recognized that in order to improve the availability of off-load nurse staffing that 12 hours per day – 7 days per week would be necessary.

PRHC operates on the basis of 12 hour shift rotations. Without the program moving to 12 hours per day there are limited staff available or willing to work 8

hour shifts and seemingly no availability to backfill for week-ends and/or vacations.

In recognition of the above, the 2009/10 Business Case requested enhanced funding in the amount of \$240,000.

Your ministry has recently notified us that \$138,000 funding has been approved for continuation of the program, and we sincerely appreciate that your ministry has continued to provide funding assistance to deal with this issue.

However, this level of funding will not sustain the current program of 8 hours per day – 7 days per week. Even if PRHC can arrange staffing to fulfill this level of coverage, \$155,000 in funding is necessary.

As noted previously, the effectiveness of the program is negatively impacted by not moving to 12 hour shifts.

A revised proposal has been discussed between Peterborough EMS and PRHC. A move to 12 hours per day – 5 days per week instead of 8 hours per day – 7 days per week would better fit the hospitals staffing pattern and rotation of human resources as a means of enhancing availability and dramatically improving coverage beyond the 50% and 58% levels noted earlier.

As a matter of coincidence, \$155,000 in funding is needed to move to 12 hours – 5 days per week. This same amount would maintain the status quo of 8 hours – 7 days per week.

It is our firm belief that an additional \$17,000 in funds is necessary to both sustain and improve the effectiveness of the program. I would greatly appreciate your reconsideration of the funding amount to increase it to \$155,000.

Sincerely,

Gary King
CAO, County of Peterborough

cc: Jeff Leal, MPP, Peterborough
Bob English, EMS Chief, County of Peterborough