

Electronic patient record system shut down due to cyber attack]

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An electronic patient record system used by Dufferin County Paramedic Service and other paramedic services across Ontario was shut down early last week due to a cyber attack.

Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) said in a press release issued on Friday (Nov. 18) that they were informed that ESO, the third-party platform used to record patient data, was taken offline in response to "unauthorized access".

Headwaters Health Care Centre said that the service interruption would not affect the paramedic services' ability to respond to 9-1-1 emergency calls.

"Patient care is our top priority," said Tom Reid, Chief of Dufferin Paramedic Service. "We are still providing services and responding to 9-1-1 calls. We are documenting all our actions locally now until the system is back online."

ESO is a Texas-based company that claims to be the largest software and data solutions provider to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies and fire departments.

Dufferin County Paramedic Service uses the platform to gather and share information with hospitals about incoming patients. Part of the system is also used for community paramedicine services and other management functions.

Cybersecurity experts are supporting the investigation with ESO.

"There is also no evidence to date that any confidential information has been compromised," said the press release from HHCC.

Until further notice, patients under the care of Dufferin County Community Paramedicine Program can confirm or book their appointments by phone at 519-941-0509 or toll free at 1-844-791-1182 or by email at communityparamedic@dufferincounty.ca.

Updates will be shared as they become available.