

Province increases base funding for Dufferin County paramedics

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

The Ontario government is increasing its base funding for land ambulances in Dufferin County.

The province announced nearly \$5.5 million on Tuesday, Sept. 9, representing a 11 percent increase in the amount of money the County of Dufferin receives annually.

“This increase in base funding helps ensure municipalities address increased costs so they can continue to deliver high-quality emergency care. This investment is part of the almost \$1 billion in land ambulance funding Ontario is providing municipalities across the province this year, representing an average increase of 8.7 per cent from 2024,” reads a news release from Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones’ office.

In addition, to further reduce delays paramedics encounter when dropping patients off at a hospital, Ontario is investing \$327,040 in the County of Dufferin through the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program to hire more nurses and other eligible health professionals dedicated to offloading ambulance patients in hospital emergency departments.

Through the program, paramedics are able to get back out into the community faster to respond to their next emergency call.

Offload times have been reduced by approximately 65 per cent, since peaking in October 2022.

“Our government is making record investments to protect Ontario’s health-care system and connect people to the care they need, when they need it,” said Jones, who’s also Deputy Premier and Ontario’s Minister of Health. “Through these additional investments, we are providing paramedics and emergency departments with the tools they need to connect more people across the province to high-quality emergency care, faster and closer to home.”

To ensure patients in need receive critical care sooner, the Ontario government is also continuing to implement the Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS).

“The system helps to better prioritize and triage emergency medical calls and dispatch paramedics sooner,” reads the release from Jones’ office.

The provincial government has expanded the use of MPDS to Mississauga, Kenora, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Renfrew, Georgian, Kingston, Lindsay, Oshawa and Timmins. It is accelerating progress to implement the system at the 10 remaining Central Ambulance Communication Centres across Ontario over a year ahead of schedule.

“With the increased funding for Dufferin County Paramedic Service, the Government of Ontario is investing in the dedicated paramedics who work tirelessly, often under challenging circumstances, to provide the highest level of care to residents,” said Garry Staples, Chief Paramedic for the County of Dufferin.

In addition, the Dedicated Offload Nurse funding will help ensure that paramedics remain available to respond to community needs in a timely manner, rather than being tied up in hospitals. This investment strengthens our local healthcare system, improves response times, and enhances the quality of care for all who call Dufferin County home.