

# Hamilton Paramedic Service 2019 Annual Report





Our Hamilton Paramedic Service members make it their priority to do whatever it takes to care for someone in need and play a vital role in promoting the health and safety of our community.

They provide medical care, social supports, charitable contributions, education and endless acts of kindness.

They truly help make the City's vision to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully a reality.



Mayor Fred Eisenberger

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## Message from the General Manager

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As the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, I am proud of all of the people of the Hamilton Paramedic Service whose skill, professionalism and compassion contributes to the health and well-being of our community.

I know that the work of paramedics goes beyond emergency response. They provide education to the public and partners, they organize charitable and informative events, through the Community Paramedicine Program they provide in-home care to people in need and they still find time to volunteer for worthy causes that help the people of Hamilton.

I want to congratulate everyone in the Hamilton Paramedic Service for another year of meeting performance targets in the face of increasing pressures due to a growing and aging population and persistent offload delays at our hospitals. In 2019, under the leadership of Chief Sanderson and with our community partners, new ways to mitigate the burden on emergency departments were explored and implemented, additional resources were acquired – in particular, two additional ambulances including staff, and Hamilton was successful in becoming one of the first Health Teams in Ontario which gives us a unique opportunity to help shape the future of integrated health care.

In the pages that follow, you will see just some of the 2019 achievements of the Hamilton Paramedic Service highlighted. To share all the great work of the people in this service would mean a report that would be at least twice as long. You can visit the Hamilton Paramedic Service web page on the City of Hamilton's website for more information on their programs and services. In addition, the performance data is available on the City's site, [Open.Hamilton.ca](http://Open.Hamilton.ca)

With the support of our Mayor, City Council and City Manager we have and will continue to seek out optimal ways to best serve our community. I am thankful to them for their ongoing support and investment in this essential service to ensure we have what we need to be a safe and healthy Hamilton.

I would also like to thank Chief Sanderson, OPSEU, CUPE and all of the staff for delivering exceptional service to people of Hamilton. A special thank you to those who continue to serve the community on their own time. Collectively your efforts make the Hamilton Paramedic Service among the best in the province and provide assurance that ours is a community that is well cared for.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Paul Johnson, General Manager  
Healthy & Safe Community Services Department

## Message from the Chief

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Above and beyond. Two words that describe the performance of the people who, as a team, deliver exemplary services to the residents and visitors in Hamilton. Every day I see examples of our people exceeding what their job requires of them. From the frontline paramedics and supervisors to the schedulers, logistics technicians, support staff, and managers, in every aspect of our operation people consistently surpass expectations. This extends to our community partners who along with us work tirelessly to provide the community with high quality care.

Not surprisingly, 2019 was another busy year with an increase in the number of 911 events, responses and patients transported. And while we had a decrease in code zero events from 2018, we continued to be challenged by a large amount of time in hospital offload delay. Despite all of this, we again met and exceeded the response time criteria set by the City of Hamilton Council and the Ministry of Health (MOH).

I am always impressed, though not surprised, that our people continue to fulfill their duties in the face of compelling challenges yet still manage to do it with empathy, patience and positivity. Furthermore, they find opportunities to make meaningful differences in the lives of the people they serve from seemingly small gestures such as shoveling a patient's snow to bigger endeavors like growing food for food banks.

2019 also brought some uncertainty with regard to the structure of healthcare in the province. While proposed changes to ambulance services are pending, I have been participating on the Hamilton Health Team, one of the first in Ontario under the newly established Ontario Health oversight body. My input at this table will assure that land ambulance services and programs in Hamilton will have an integral role as the province moves toward a more integrated health care system.

In 2019, we were successful in receiving funding from MOH for an ambulance dedicated to neonatal transfer with additional staff. While not in use for neonatal patients the ambulance is in service to respond to any emergency call which helps to meet the increasing demand.

I would like to thank Mayor Eisenberger, City Council and the Senior Leadership Team for their active support. I would like to express my appreciation to General Manager Paul Johnson for his leadership and guidance as we continue to navigate through challenges.

Finally, my deepest gratitude to all the people of the Hamilton Paramedic Service whose passion, dedication, innovation and at times self-sacrifice has exemplified the values and priorities of the City of Hamilton. Their extraordinary efforts quite literally change the lives of the people we are privileged to serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Sanderson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael Sanderson, Chief  
Hamilton Paramedic Service

## Service Overview

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### Profile of Hamilton

Hamilton is a mid-size city located in the centre of the Golden Horseshoe between Niagara Falls and Toronto. Hamilton's land area of 1,117 square kilometres consisting of urban and rural areas divided into 15 wards. The city wraps around the westernmost part of Lake Ontario with the northern limit marked by the Hamilton Harbour. The Niagara Escarpment runs through the middle of the entire city dividing the cityscape into lower and upper portions. Hamilton has a population of 536,917 making it the fifth largest municipality in Ontario and tenth largest in Canada. The population density is approximately 480.6 people per square kilometres (Statistics Canada, Census 2016).



Hamilton's population is an aging one with just over 17% of its residents or approximately 93,000 people aged 65 years or older. Children aged 14 years and under account for a little more than 16% of the city's population. For the first time in Hamilton, seniors outnumber children (Statistic Canada, Census 2016).



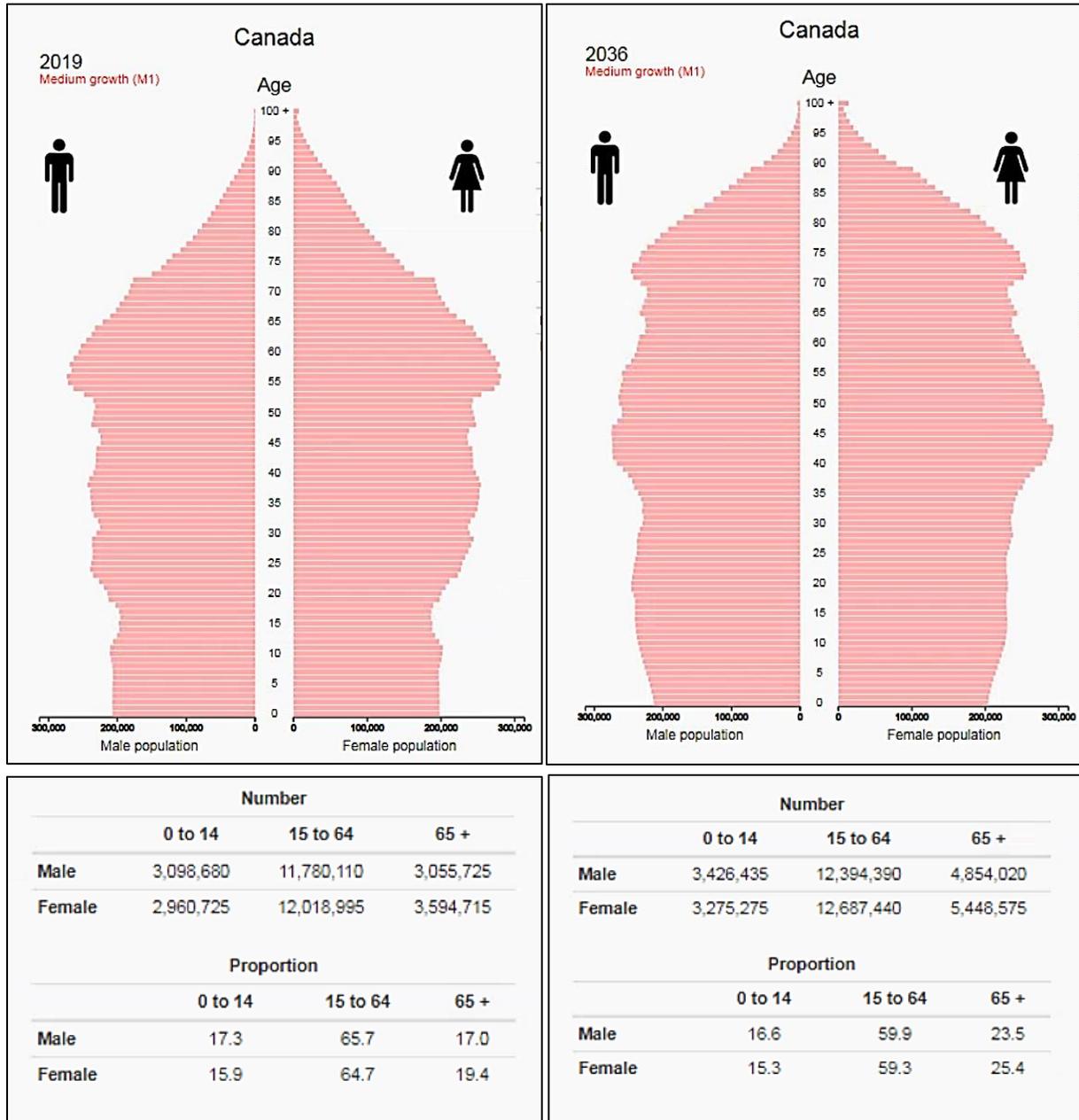
People aged 65 years and older made up 45% of the patients paramedics interacted with in 2019, that is, approximately 68,000 people requiring the care of paramedics were 65 or older. This is an increase of almost 3,000 senior patients from 2018.

In Ontario, the number of seniors aged 65 and over is projected to almost double by 2041. In 2017, seniors made up about 2.4 million or 16.7 per cent of population. This is expected to increase to almost 4.6 million or 24.8 per cent of Ontario's population. The fastest growing group of seniors will be the older seniors. The number of people aged 75 and over is expected to rise from 1 million in 2017 to 2.7 million by 2041. Those people who are aged 90 and older are projected to more than triple in size, from 120,000 to 400,000 (Ontario Ministry of Finance).

above&  
beyond



According to Statistics Canada (Census 2016) in addition to a growing population Ontario can expect to see a sharp increase in the number of seniors as baby boomers swell the ranks of seniors. As shown below, the proportion of people over the age of 65 is expected to increase from just over 36% in 2019 to almost 49% by 2036.



Source: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/pyramid/pyramid.cfm?type=1&geo1=01>

This “grey tsunami” or dramatic increase in the senior population forecasted by Statistics Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Finance will significantly increase the demand on services provided by the HPS over the next 20 years.

## HPS Services

The Hamilton Paramedic Service (HPS) is the designated sole land ambulance service provider for the City of Hamilton. Through 66 vehicles and 20 stations in both urban and rural areas of the city, HPS provides pre-hospital advanced medical and trauma care and transport of patients from emergency incidents to health care facilities.

HPS also provides a range of programs and services to promote the health of the community and proactively mitigate the demand on ambulance transports to hospitals. These include:

- Seniors Clinics
- Home Visits
- Flu Immunization Clinics
- Remote Patient Monitoring
- Social Navigator Program
- Public Access Defibrillators
- Flu Response for Emergency Department Diversion
- Emergency Department Diversion Withdrawal Management Program
- Public Education
- Community Engagement
- Stakeholder Engagement and Education
- Media Campaigns
- Continuing Education Classes for Hamilton Paramedics

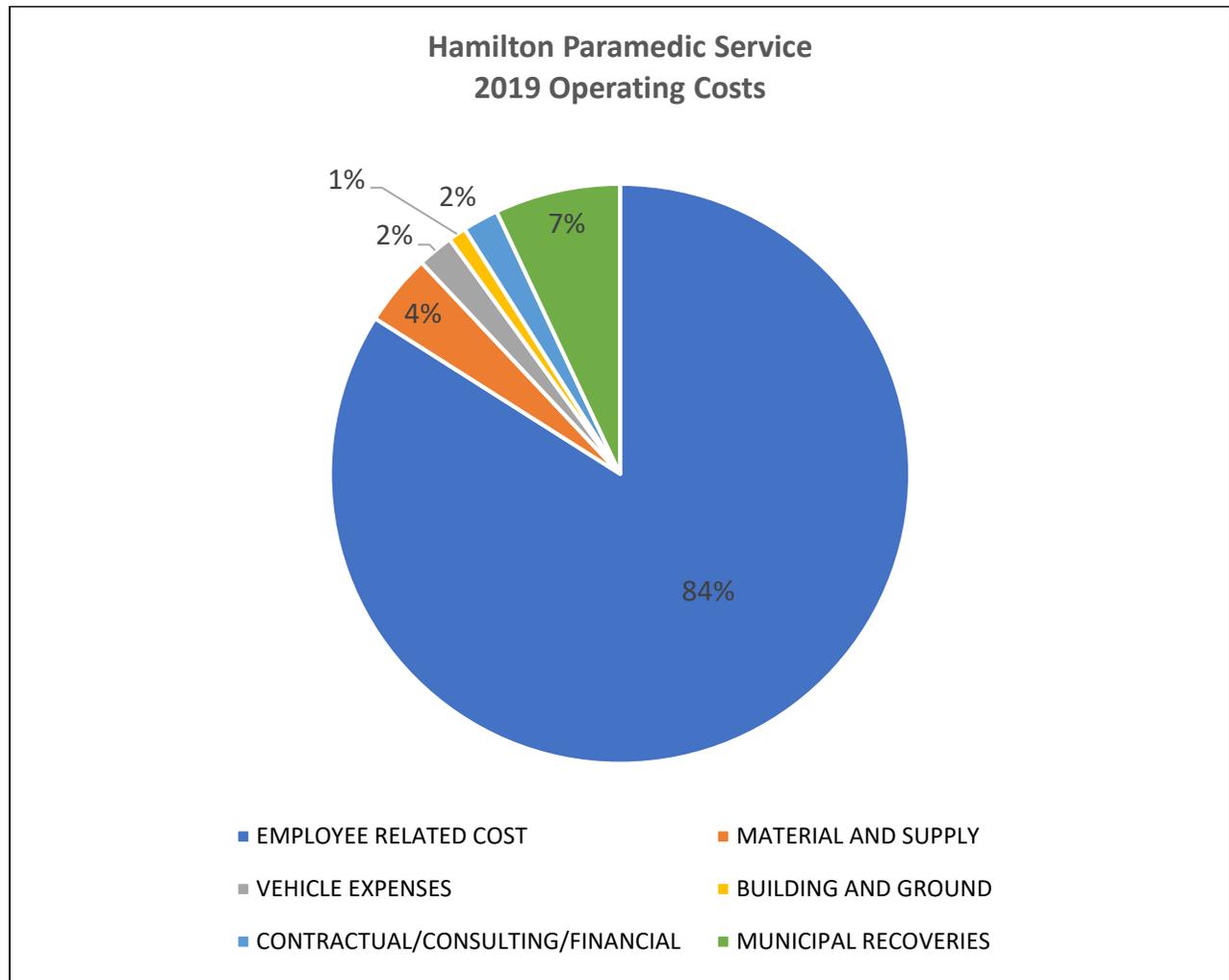
In addition, HPS undertakes a range of initiatives to mitigate offload delay in partnership with Hamilton hospitals. HPS also works with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to ensure effective systems are in place that enable the provision of quality care to the community.



## HPS Finances

While HPS had an overall operating budget of \$51,115,239 in 2019, the province provided funding for 50% of the costs. The allocation of funds per each cost category and percentage of the overall budget is as follows:

| <b>COST CATEGORY 2019</b>                  | <b>\$</b>         | <b>%</b>   |
|--|-------------------|------------|
| Employee Related Cost                      | 42,780,569        | 84         |
| Municipal Recoveries (Excl CA Shop Labour) | 3,767,030         | 7          |
| Material and Supply                        | 2,039,917         | 4          |
| Vehicle Expenses                           | 1,004,492         | 2          |
| Contractual/Consulting/Financial           | 1,193,376         | 2          |
| Building and Ground                        | 329,855           | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>51,115,239</b> | <b>100</b> |



HPS achieves cost effectiveness in operating vehicles through partnerships within the City of Hamilton. With corporate fuel purchasing arrangements and utilizing the Hamilton Fire Department vehicle maintenance services, HPS realizes cost efficiencies without jeopardizing quality service. The costs per response is as follows:



Total Kilometres Travelled

1,909,099



Cost of Materials and Supplies per Response

\$23.44



Total Cost per Response

\$587.28



Vehicle Cost per Kilometre

\$0.67



**Hamilton Paramedics** @HPS\_Paramedics · Mar 1, 2019

Thanks for sharing Drew. Loving hearing about how are crews are out helping our residents. Prevention is always good medicine, and taking a few minutes to clear a walk, can prevent a slip, fall and surgery.



**Drew Goodman** @dasgooder · Mar 1, 2019

Saw some @HPS\_Paramedics shovelling a driveway and walkway for a house downtown. Proud to see EMS always going above and beyond.

above&  
beyond



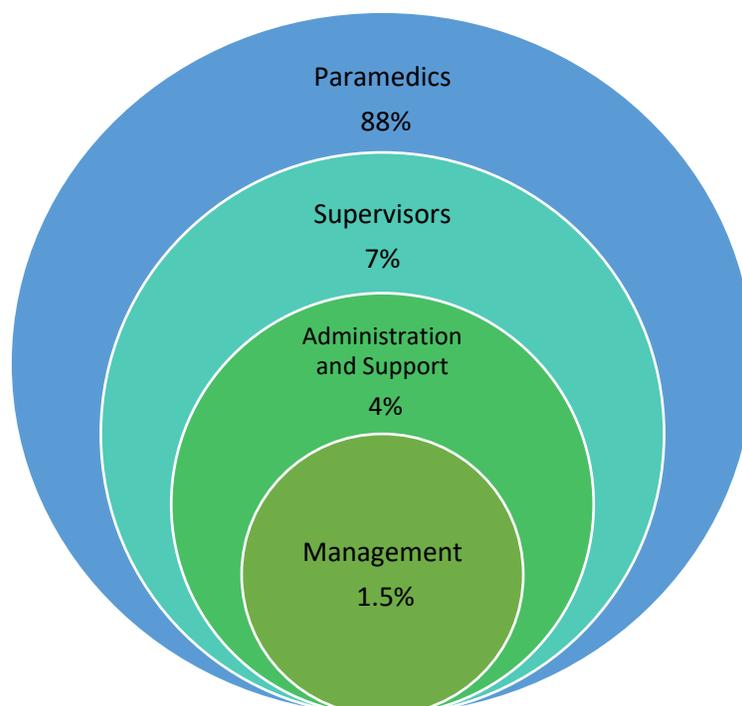
## HPS Structure

As an integral part of the health care system, HPS helps to promote the health and safety of Hamilton's residents and visitors through prevention, response and follow-up activities. HPS achieves this best through being situated within the Healthy and Safe Communities Department which enables collaboration with other divisions focused on similar outcomes for the community.

Reporting to the General Manger of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, the Paramedic Chief is responsible to lead the planning and operationalization of HPS which is comprised of four sections:

- Office of the Chief
  - Responsible for strategic vision, direction, and planning
- Operations Section
  - Responsible for providing oversight of deployment and resource utilization
- Logistics Section
  - Responsible for providing support to all sections through procurement and asset management
- Performance and Development Section
  - Responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance and quality improvement

A total of 398 staff including full and part time made up the workforce of HPS in 2019. Approximately 88% of staff are paramedics with about 19% of those Advanced Care Paramedics. While paramedics provide direct frontline services to the community, supervisors, administration and support staff and management provide a variety of supportive and regulatory functions to meet MOH mandates. HPS workforce breaks down as follows:



## Performance Overview

### Events

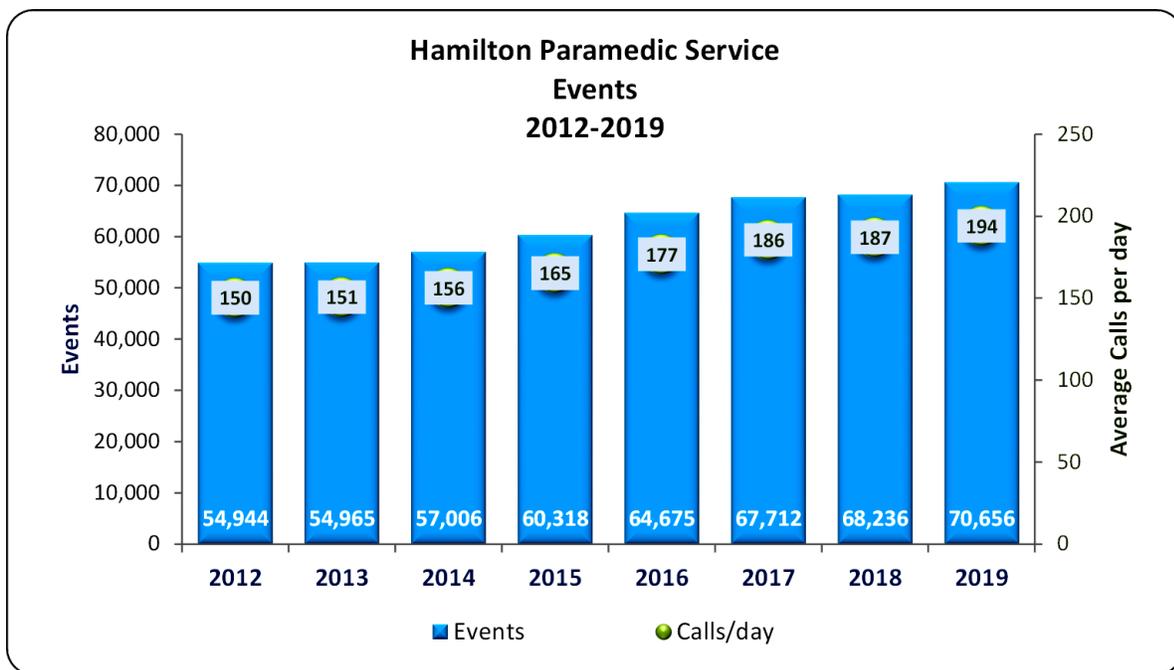
An event is generated every time a person calls 911 and requests the assistance of paramedics through dispatch, the Central Ambulance Communications Centre (CACC). In 2019, HPS continued to see an increase in the number of events with a total of 70,656, an average of 194 events per day.

70,656 Events

194/day  
on average



The following chart illustrates the year-over-year increase in events since 2012 along with the average daily events each year.



“In the park I noticed a man having problems...he was inhaling from a spray can. I called 911. When the paramedics attended they addressed him by his name and treated him with respect, dignity and compassion. The first thing the paramedic did was kneel down and held the man’s hand explaining he just wanted to make sure he was ok.

Their professionalism was second to none.”

above&  
beyond

## Responses

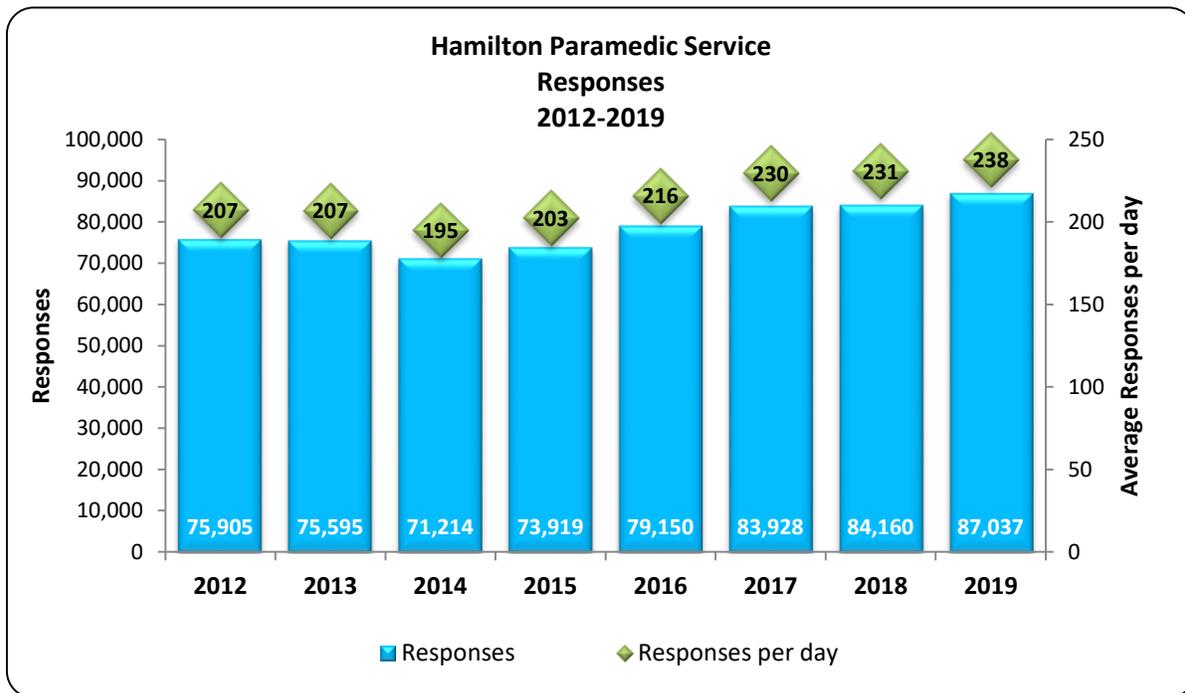
Responses are the number of paramedic vehicles that are sent to an event. This number is usually higher than the number of events as there is usually more than one vehicle sent to an event. In instances such as motor vehicle collisions and complex medical/traumatic emergencies, multiple paramedic vehicles may be assigned to respond. In 2019, HPS had a total of 87,037 responses with a daily average of 238 responses.



87,037 Responses

238/day  
on average

The chart below shows the number of responses per year since 2012 along with the average number of responses a day for each year.



| Patient Problem                       | % of Responses |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Dyspnea (shortness of breath)         | 14             |
| Fall                                  | 11             |
| Abdominal/Pelvic/Perineal/Rectal Pain | 5              |
| Ischemic Chest Pain                   | 5              |
| Unconscious                           | 4              |
| Unwell                                | 4              |
| Motor Vehicle Collision               | 4              |
| Behaviour/Psychiatric                 | 3              |
| Musculoskeletal                       | 3              |
| Cardiac/Medical Arrest                | 3              |

## Complaints

The table to the left shows the top ten reasons patients called HPS for medical assistance in 2019.

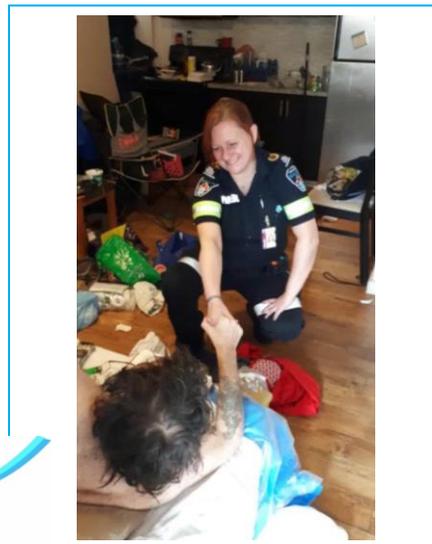
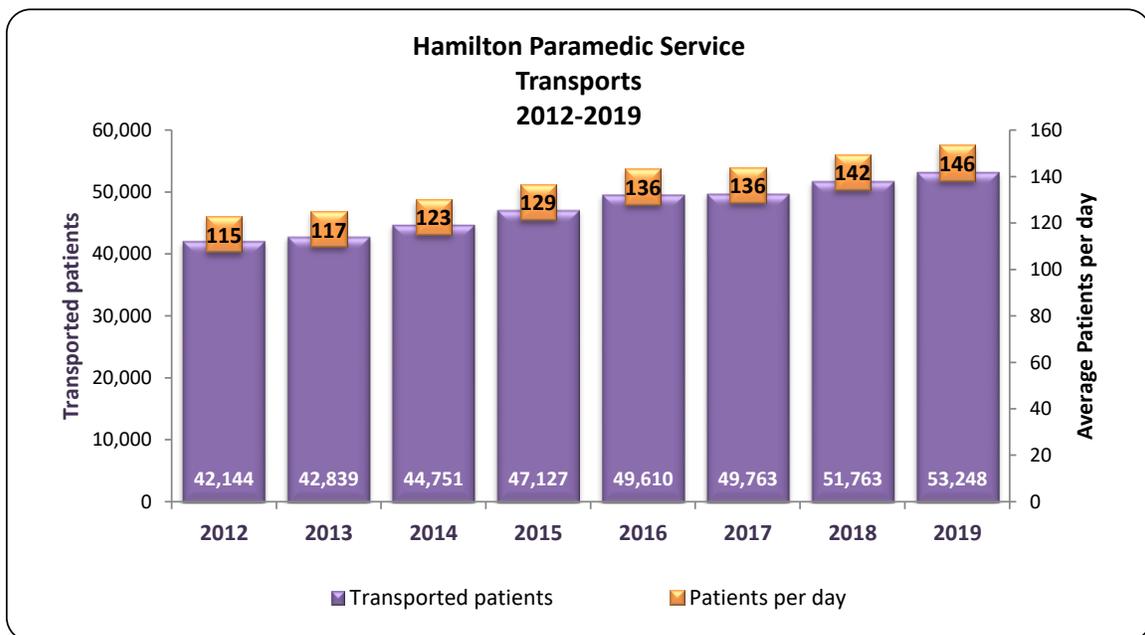
## Transports

Transports refers to the number of times patients are transported to hospitals by paramedics. This number is typically lower than the number of events, as some patients decline or do not need to be taken to the hospital once assessed by the paramedics. The number of transports continued to increase in 2019 with a total of 53,248 and an average of 146 per day.



53,248 Transports

146/day on average



above & beyond

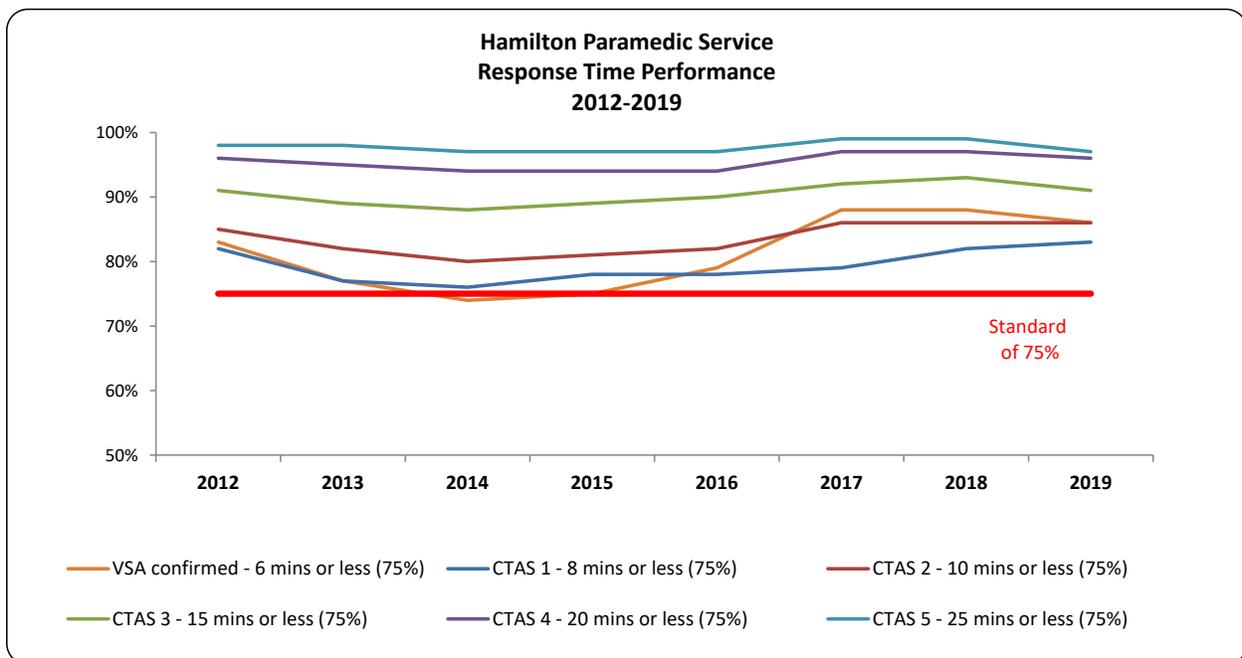
## Response Time Compliance

The *Ambulance Act of Ontario* requires that every paramedic operator in Ontario is responsible to establish and publicly report on response time performance. The City of Hamilton and MOH approved target response times based on the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS). CTAS is a triage system that prioritizes patient care by severity of the injury or illness. HPS is expected to achieve the target times in each CTAS category at least 75% of the time.

In 2019, HPS again surpassed the standard of 75% in achieving the target times for each CTAS category.

| CTAS Category      | Acuity Level  | Target Time | Standard % of Time Target Time to be Achieved | % of Time HPS Achieved Target Time |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Vital Signs Absent | VSA Confirmed | 6 minutes   | 75  | 86                                 |
| 1                  | Resuscitation | 8 minutes   | 75  | 83                                 |
| 2                  | Emergent      | 10 minutes  | 75  | 86                                 |
| 3                  | Urgent        | 15 minutes  | 75  | 91                                 |
| 4                  | Less Urgent   | 20 minutes  | 75  | 96                                 |
| 5                  | Non-Urgent    | 25 minutes  | 75  | 97                                 |

The graph below shows that HPS continues to meet and exceed the response time standard year over year despite the increase in events, responses and transports each year.

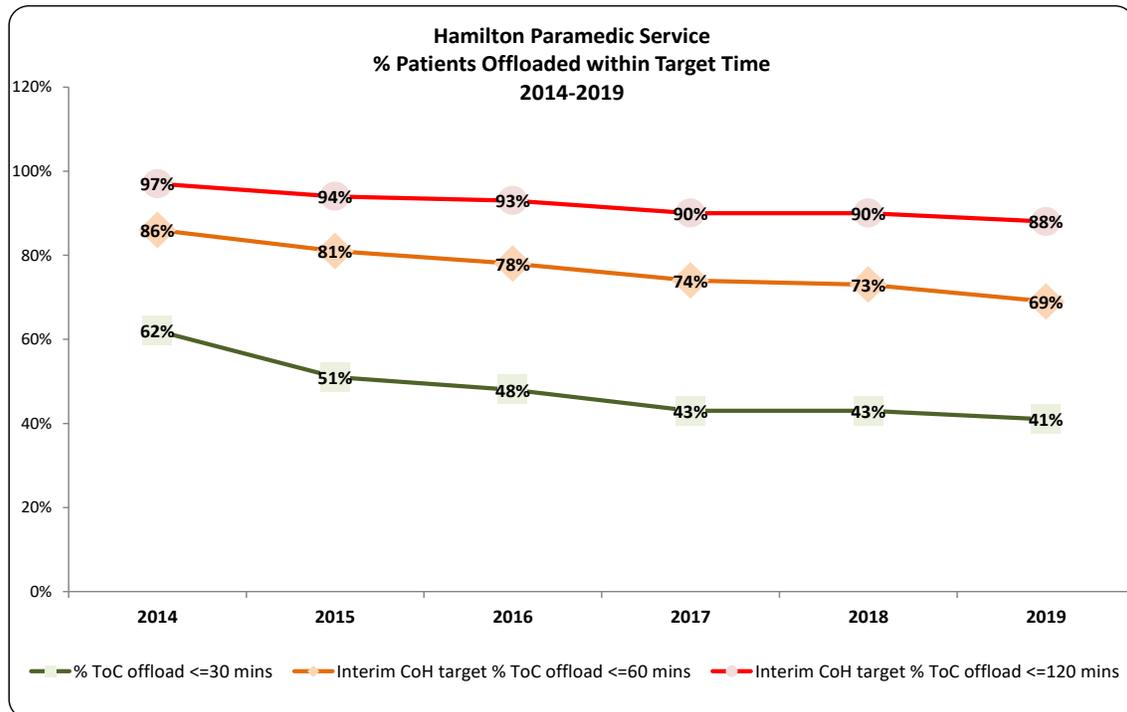


## Off-Load Delay

An off-load delay occurs when the hospital does not accept responsibility for the care of the patient from paramedics within 30 minutes of their arrival to the Emergency Department. MOH recommends that transfer of care of patients occurs within 30 minutes 90% of the time. Paramedics are required to remain with and care for the patient until the hospital is ready to accept the responsibility.

As a result of a variety of system pressures, hospitals in Hamilton continue to struggle to meet the target of accepting the patient within 30 minutes of paramedic arrival. Thus, the City of Hamilton and hospitals have implemented interim targets of transfer of care to hospital within 60 minutes 90% of the time and within 120 minutes 100% of the time.

However, in 2019, only 41% of patients were transferred from paramedics to the hospital in 30 minutes or less. Transfer of care within 60 minutes occurred 69% of the time, falling short of the interim target of 90% of the time. Similarly, hospitals took over the care of patients from paramedics within 120 minutes 88% of the time, although the target is 100% of the time. The chart below shows the percentage of time patients were transferred to the care of hospitals within 30, 60 and 120 minutes for each year since 2014.



In 2019 paramedics spent **30,549** hours in excess of 30 minutes waiting in Emergency Departments to transfer care of their patient to the hospital

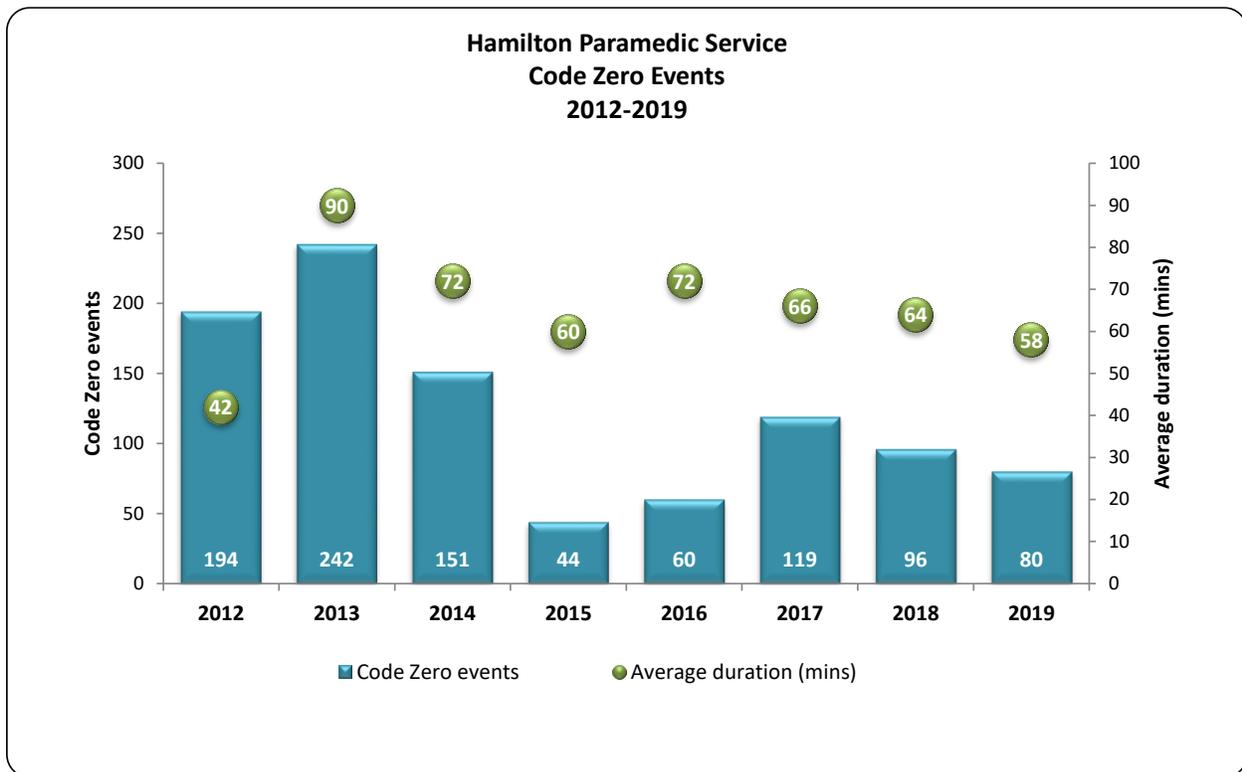
Photo Credit: CBC.ca  
2018



## Code Zero Events

Code Zero events occur when the number of ambulances available to respond to a call are limited to just one or none. Long off-load delays, particularly when there are 10 or more delays longer than 2 hours in one day, continue to be the major cause of code zero events. When a code zero event occurs, ambulances from neighboring municipalities are assigned to respond to emergency calls in Hamilton.

In 2019, there were a total of 80 code zero events that lasted almost an hour on average. The graph below shows the number of code zero events from 2012 to 2019 and the average length of time a code zero event lasted that year.



“The one paramedic helped my wife cut up some food for me...to try to get my sugar level up. I spilled some on the floor and the paramedic cleaned it up. Being seniors, we appreciated it. The paramedics stayed with us until my blood sugar level was fine.  
Job well done!”

above  
&  
beyond

## Community Paramedicine

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HPS began the Community Paramedicine program in 2014. Through a range of approaches the program helps clients who have complex and chronic conditions by meeting their needs where they live and thereby reducing emergency department visits and hospital stays.

Hamilton's program is focused on three key areas:

**NAVIGATE** connecting clients to the resources they need

**ADVOCATE** ensuring clients have access to the resources they need

**COLLABORATE** working with community partners to ensure clients' needs are met



### Home Visits

When someone has been identified as using 911 services regularly a specially trained Community Paramedic is notified who visits the client in their home and conducts an in-depth assessment. As part of a network of service providers the paramedic can quickly connect the client to the resources they require. In 2019, 653 clients were enrolled in the Home Visit

Program with Community Paramedics making 347 visits resulting in a 50% reduction in calling an ambulance among these clients.

### Clinics

Clinics are set up in selected buildings where vulnerable seniors reside. Community Paramedics' interventions are focused on health promotion and the prevention and monitoring of high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and social isolation.

In 2019, the Clinic Program operated in nine vulnerable seniors' buildings throughout the city with a total of 260 sessions and over 1,900 visits by residents.



### Flu Clinics

In 2018, the Clinic Program expanded to include influenza immunization during the flu season. In November and December 2019, 50 clinics were held with 236 residents of vulnerable seniors' buildings receiving the flu shot. In a feedback survey, recipients said the convenience of having the shot available in their building prevented them from having to travel in inclement weather and ensured that they received the vaccination.

### Remote Patient Monitoring

The Remote Patient Monitoring Program leverages technology to allow patients to stay in their homes while being monitored by Community Paramedics. Information about the patient's chronic condition is transmitted from a variety of devices to a database monitored by a paramedic. If a predetermined threshold is exceeded, a Community Paramedic promptly contacts the patient. In 2019, there were 51 new patients enrolled in the program bringing the total to 74 patients who are using remote technology to monitor their health. Analysis conducted by Queens University shows that this program results in a 26% reduction in both 911 calls and emergency department visits.



### Social Navigator

The Social Navigator Program (SNP) is a collaboration with the Hamilton Police Service to support at-risk individuals and those with repeat police interactions by connecting them to health and social services they require. In 2019, there were 105 clients in the SNP although over 280 people were referred to the program. There was also contact made with an additional 301 individuals who needed brief assistance.

Social Navigators referred their clients to 241 various programs and services to provide support for housing/shelter, mental health, rehabilitation, primary care, income and employment as well as assisting in attending appointments and obtaining food and clothing.

The SNP has been successful in reducing the amount of times police were called for clients for adverse purposes.

### Public Access Defibrillation

The Community Paramedic Program is responsible for the maintenance and tracking of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) throughout the city and advocate to increase in the number of AEDs in the community. Medical evidence shows that when an AED and CPR are administered immediately, often by a bystander, the chance of survival from sudden cardiac arrest is substantially improved by up to 75%.

In 2019, there were 439 AEDs in the city and three uses. In one instance a 9-year-old child was successfully resuscitated. AEDs are located throughout the city in public buildings, such as City of Hamilton office buildings, schools, libraries, local event arenas, fitness centres, recreational facilities, hockey arenas and seniors' centres.



### **Paramedic Palliative Outreach Support Team**

The PPOST Program is a new Community Paramedic Program initiated in October 2019. A specially trained team of Community Paramedics are contacted when a patient’s palliative care team is unavailable. Community Paramedics are able to support the patient through a palliative crisis in their home and avoid a transport to the emergency department. Since October, the team has supported five patients and averted four hospital visits. There are plans to expand the program to provide paramedic support to palliative care patients in 2020.

### **Flu Response for Emergency Department Diversion**

The FREDD Program is a new Community Paramedic Program initiated in December 2019. It provides a mobile response unit to influenza-like illness calls at long-term care homes during the flu season. Paramedics treat long-term care residents in the home thereby decreasing the need to go to the hospital. This program continued until the end of March 2020.



### **Emergency Department Diversion to Withdrawal Management**

The EDWIN Program is another new Community Paramedic Program that began in late December 2019. It enables paramedics to transport men with addiction-related issues to the Men’s Addiction Service Hamilton (MASH) rather than to hospital emergency departments. In 2020, the program will be expanded to include transports to two additional facilities: Womankind Addiction Services and Youth Substance Use Prevention.

In her spare time, paramedic Mandie crochets hats for newborns. The hats are included in all paramedic obstetrical kits.

They are even in HPS colours.

The hats stay with the babies so Mandie is always busy crocheting.



## Clinical Excellence

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Clinical excellence is demonstrated by Hamilton paramedics through a commitment to continued growth and development. In 2019, paramedics underwent an aggregate total of 25,131 instructional hours. A variety of procedures were implemented in 2019 that expand the range of capabilities of paramedics so they can provide excellent clinical care to patients.

### **Intraosseous Infusion**

Intraosseous infusion (IO) is used to directly access the marrow of bone to provide fluid and medication when intravenous access is not possible. In 2019, paramedics were trained on the utilization of the EZ-IO device to quickly and effectively gain vascular access in emergency situations. Since implementation in the fall, the EZ-IO device has been used 36 times.



### **Autonomous Intravenous (AIV)**

In 2019, for the first time Primary Care Paramedics were given the opportunity to utilize their certification acquired from other services to administer intravenous (IV) in Hamilton. In the past, this procedure was within the scope of practice of Advanced Care Paramedics only. Since September 2019, 19 paramedics have been certified in autonomous IV. In 2020, all Hamilton Primary Care Paramedics will be given the opportunity to be certified in AIV.

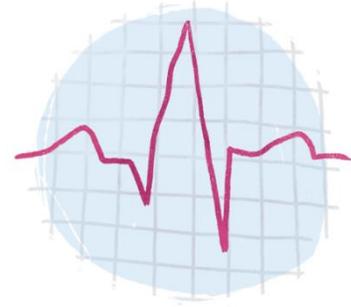
### **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit**

In 2019, with funding from MOH, HPS acquired an ambulance dedicated to critically ill newborns. Paramedics will work with the McMaster Children's Hospital NICU transport team to transfer babies from referring hospitals to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at McMaster.



### Paramedic Clinical Feedback

Once paramedics transfer the care of a patient to the hospital, they do not have access to information about the patient’s outcome or how their actions impacted the outcome. A specialty program with the Hamilton General Hospital’s Heart Investigation Unit (HIU) allows paramedics to transport heart attack patients directly to the HIU where a medical team is prepared to receive and treat the patient. In 2019, this program was enhanced to include feedback data from HIU to HPS related to the efficacy of paramedic procedures and results of HIU tests. This allows paramedics to build on strengths and identify and develop areas for improvement. The paramedic clinical feedback initiative will be expanded to include the specialty programs for trauma and stroke patients.



### National Paramedic Competition

This annual competition is a one-day event that challenges paramedics on academic tests, practical scenarios using human actors and patient simulators. Paramedics and student paramedics from across the country compete to showcase clinical excellence. In 2019, Hamilton was represented by a Primary Care Paramedic team and an Advanced Care Paramedic team who won third place in their division. The 2020 competition is scheduled to be hosted by HPS in Hamilton.



PCP Division  
Heidi Bergeron and Brian Mak



ACP Division  
David Egier and Andrew Newlands



## Continuous Improvement

A range of projects were undertaken in 2019 to improve processes, policies and services to ensure the HPS delivers optimal care to the community. Some of these projects are highlight below.

### Tiered Response Agreement Review

The Tiered Response Agreement (TRA) between HPS and Hamilton Fire Department was established to ensure a timely response to medical emergencies in the community. In December 2019, a team of subject matter experts from paramedic, fire and dispatch services assembled for the first time to conduct a detailed review of the TRA and analysis of data to define its criteria. The project team will identify areas for improvement and efficiencies to the TRA and related processes. A report of their recommendations will be provided to Council for consideration in 2020.



### Stair Chair Upgrade

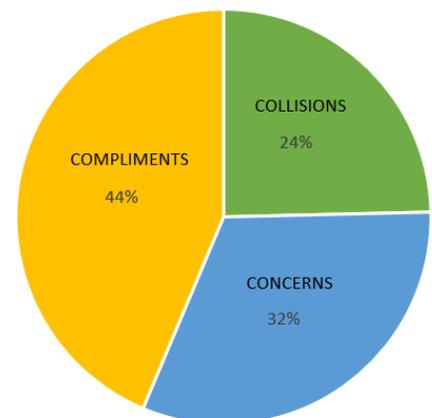


A stair chair is used by paramedics for alert patients who need to be transported down stairs or through narrow confined spaces. In 2019, paramedics identified the type of chair that best suits their needs and the needs of their patients. After participating in trials using a variety of stair chairs, paramedics completed a survey to indicate their preference. In 2019, the bariatric ambulance was equipped with the chair selected by most paramedics. In 2020, the preferred chair for all other ambulances will replace the current ones. The new chair is lighter weight, easier to handle and therefore will help to reduce the risk of injury due to lifting.

### Quality Assurance

HPS has a robust quality assurance program that, among other activities, reviews and responds to feedback from both external and internal customers. Follow-up with paramedics is an integral part of the program to ensure the continuous improvement of HPS service delivery.

In 2019, 268 reviews were conducted to identify opportunities for improvement and employee recognition. Sixty-six were related to collisions, 85 were concerns about conduct and practice while 117 were compliments on paramedics' performance (not including social media posts).



Hamilton Paramedic Service  
Quality Reviews 2019



Liz Bates, Paramedic Supervisor

### **New Policy Manual**

An extensive review of HPS policy and procedures was undertaken in 2018 by a Paramedic Supervisor with expertise. In the fall of 2019, a new manual was introduced to staff for feedback. The new manual has 42 policies reduced from 262 policies and procedures in the previous manual. Outdated and repetitive content was removed, and policies were rewritten in plain language with a clear purpose and includes links to related material such as legislation and training materials.

Policies in the new manual represent the values of HPS, respect the knowledge and professionalism of staff and are not punitive referring only to discipline in the discipline policy. The new policy manual will go into full effect by early 2021.

### **Expanded Community Paramedicine Program**

In the latter half of 2019, HPS expanded the Community Paramedicine Program in a continued effort to assist clients in the community and decrease the need for hospital visits. As described earlier, through the PPOST Program paramedics can assist palliative patients in their homes. The FREDD Program enables paramedics to treat long-term care residents with flu-like symptoms in the residence. The EDWIN Program allows for paramedics to transport clients with addiction-related issues to a facility rather than the hospital. In 2020, HPS will continue to expand existing Community Paramedicine Programs and explore new ones.

As well as adding new innovative programs to the Community Paramedicine Program, in 2019 Community Paramedics joined the Ontario Health Network enabling them to make virtual home visits.

### **Public Health Services Collaboration**

#### **Influenza Vaccines**

In collaboration with Public Health Services, HPS was able to provide flu shots through the Community Paramedicine Program in 2019. Public Health Services supplied the vaccine, carried out inspections, supported the program and HPS provided Public Health Services with reports of progress.

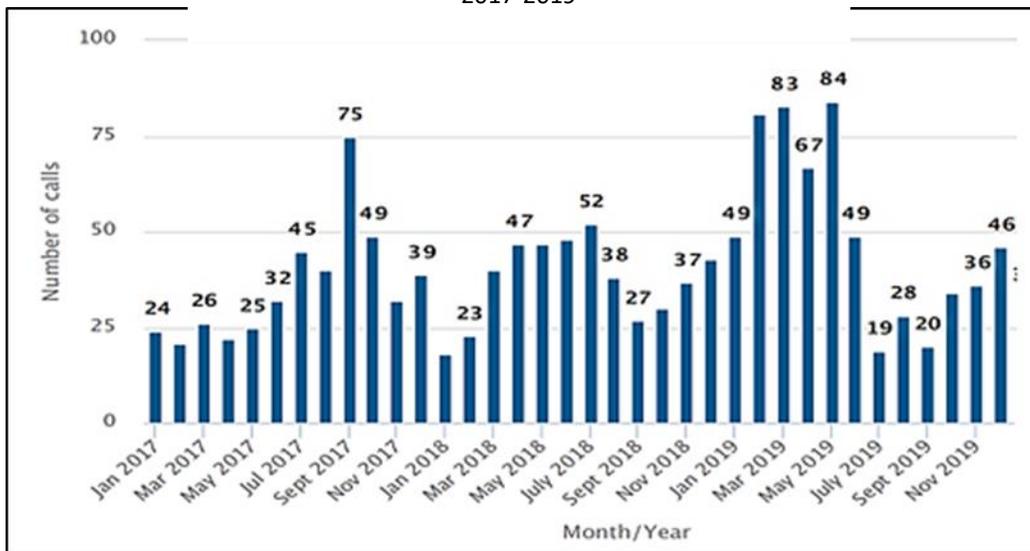
“From the time the paramedics arrived until they passed off my dad [to the care of the hospital], they were nothing but professional, and, in fact, went over and above their duties to be empathetic, caring, and very reassuring to my mother. My parents are both diabetic and they even made sure that they had a sandwich and a drink while they were waiting [in the emergency department].”



## Opioid Information System

HPS continues to collaborate with Public Health Services to provide timely data on opioid-related emergencies to the public through the Hamilton Opioid Information System on the City’s website. Tracking suspected opioid overdoses helps to inform mitigation efforts. In 2019, paramedics assisted approximately 596 people suspected of opioid overdose.

Monthly Opioid-Related Paramedic Incidents in Hamilton  
2017-2019



## Paramedic Services User Profile

**Hamilton Paramedic Service:  
A User Profile**

A collaborative project between Hamilton Paramedic and Public Health Services

June 2019

In 2019, Public Health Services completed an analysis of 2018 paramedic patient call records to help HPS better understand the characteristics of people who access ambulance services multiple times.

The analysis generated a comprehensive report that is utilized for messaging to the community and stakeholders and informs HPS program planning as well as the ten-year Master Plan set to be released in 2020.

**Key Messages 2018**

- In 2018, there were 61,856 paramedic calls made by 41,029 unique patients
- Seniors make up a large portion of the callers
- Common problems include minor trauma, generally feeling unwell, abdominal or back problems, respiratory problems, and issues related to mental health & addictions
- 15% of callers refuse paramedic transport
  - ▲ Fall/ Lift Assist
  - ▲ No Complaints
- High frequency callers make up a small proportion of callers but their needs are different
- The most common problems among high frequency callers are mental health & addiction issues
- Youth and young adults are over-represented among high frequency callers
- More high frequency callers are picked up on the street, transported later in the day, and taken to St. Joe’s hospital
- Many high frequency callers who refuse paramedic transport are related to mental health & addiction issues

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# Community Connections

## Community Events

Hamilton paramedics play an important role in the community not just because they provide quality care and emergency response but also because they provide information and support to various community groups. In 2019, HPS participated in over 30 community events of a wide variety including festivals, fairs, parades and fundraisers as well as educational, awareness-raising, appreciation and career development events.

HPS is able to support these events through utilizing paramedic volunteers, paramedics on modified duties and in special circumstances frontline staff or superintendents are able to attend these events. This ensures that no paramedics are taken away from their primary duty of being able to respond to emergency calls.



## Media Presence

HPS had a strong media presence in 2019. Through over 60 spots in local television, newspaper and radio HPS shares important information relating to their work, raising awareness of key community issues and supporting community health, safety and well-being.



### 2019 Twitter Activity

@HPS\_Paramedics

366 Tweets

14,000 Followers

2,295 Retweets

11,767 Likes

2.2 million Impressions

As well, through the HPS Twitter account, HPS was able to share timely news about emergency incidents, promote key community events and HPS charity work and celebrate the dedication of paramedics across the region. Social media also provided a platform to disseminate educational information related to drowning prevention, CPR, substance use and driving, when to call 911, rail track safety, stroke awareness and safety tips during inclement weather. In 2019, the HPS Twitter account had over 14,000 followers with a reach of over 2.2 million impressions or the number of times an HPS tweet appeared on users' timelines impressions.

## Charity Support

Not only do Hamilton paramedics participate in community fundraisers such as Tim Horton's Camp and McHappy Day, they also help to lead various charitable causes. The following are just a few charitable endeavours that took place in 2019:

### Tour de Paramedic Ride 2019

The Hamilton paramedics' cycling team Escarpment City Gears (ECGs) took part in the 2019 ride from Toronto to Ottawa with some starting in Hamilton and riding over 600 kilometers. The ride raised funds for the Canadian Paramedic Memorial Foundation for a monument to honour paramedics who have lost their lives in the line of duty. For four years, Hamilton paramedics have been involved in the ride and have raised close to \$20,000.





### Community Garden

The garden began six years ago by paramedics who continue to volunteer their time to tend the garden. The bulk of the produce is donated to Neighbour to Neighbour Centre. In 2019, Victory Gardens provided seeds and seedlings for the garden and the garden yielded over 1,835 pounds of produce for donation.

### Sirens for Life

In 2019, Hamilton paramedics once again took part in the Canadian Blood Services challenge for local first responders to donate blood to ensure adequate blood inventory at hospitals. In 2019, there were 171 first responders in Hamilton contributing to the cause.



### Food Drive

Hamilton paramedics partnered again with Neighbour to Neighbour, the Burlington Auxiliary O.P.P. and Fortinos for the 2019 annual food drive. This effort provides essential food to families in need during the holidays. In 2019, the drive raised over \$26,000 in cash donations and approximately 12,300 pounds of food.

### Toy Drive

The annual Paramedic Toy Drive for CityKidz ensures that children experiencing the challenges of poverty receive a personalized and meaningful gift at Christmas. In 2019, the toy drive raised almost \$8,900 and 2,100 toys that filled two ambulances.



## Awards of Achievement

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A number of Hamilton paramedics were formally recognized in 2019 for their extraordinary achievements in serving the community and their peers.



Gord Mooney a Community Paramedic dedicated to helping people in need through the Social Navigator Program earned the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada Award of Excellence for client centered initiatives.

Gord was also recognized for his achievement by Hamilton's City Council.



Michael Giovinazzo was awarded the Governor General of Canada Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Second Bar for 40 years of dedicated service as a Primary Care Paramedic.



Traicee Chan was recognized for her innovation and commitment to her peers' well-being through her work on the Peer Support Team. Traicee's efforts help to strengthen the morale and cohesiveness of paramedics.



Primary Care Paramedics Dave Dean and Davina Shantz received the Hamilton Health Sciences Centre for Paramedic Education and Research (CPEER) Quality of Care Award. This award is for excellence in patient care and is peer-nominated.



Advanced Care Paramedics David Egier and Andrew Newland won third place in their division of the National Paramedic Competition.



In 2019, 35 recruits successfully completed the recruitment process and joined the HPS family prepared to deliver excellence in service to the Hamilton community. (Shown above, Recruit Class of June 2019)

Paramedics Stefan and Mandie organized 25 volunteers to help clean up Hamilton's Bayfront Park.

