



CITY OF
Lethbridge



January 22, 2024

Honourable Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Health
423 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T5K 2B6

Re: EMS Dispatch

Dear Minister LaGrange:

On behalf of the Councils of Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer and our respective Fire Chiefs, we request once more that your ministry help to improve patient care by reversing the decision of Alberta Health Services (AHS) to fully consolidate EMS Dispatch and instead have it return to the previous regional integrated model.

We support your goal to ensure Albertans have improved access to world-class health care when and where they need it. We commend your willingness to reform structures to decentralize decision-making and resources to the front lines and local communities. To that end, we ask that you extend those principles to EMS Dispatch across the province.

Our municipalities applaud the Government of Alberta's decision to return the regional dispatch model back to the Rural Municipality of Wood Buffalo. This is a positive start, however, there is more to do. To truly return to a superior dispatch system, the above-mentioned municipalities must receive back their regional EMS Dispatch centres.

Following the review of the most recently released AEPAC report and the PwC EMS Dispatch Review, it has also become additionally evident, that a lack of capacity is the source of multiple healthcare challenges, particularly in the EMS Dispatch system.

Since the transition date in late January of 2021 for all three of the mentioned regions, and through a remaining and consistent monitoring of the EMS Dispatch service by each, there continues to be data that substantiates the original claims that the centralization of EMS Dispatch has resulted in a degradation of service to Albertans. The following trends identified to Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services in April of 2021 are currently impacting our communities today.

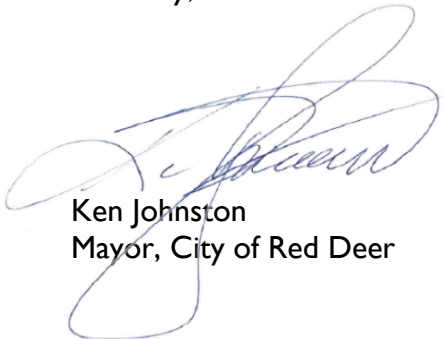
- Addressing errors or delays (verifying the address of the emergency)
- Delay in Medical First Response Dispatch (Fire Department Assist)
- Critical Safety Alerts not issued for EMS crew safety
- Deviations in Medical Priority Dispatch System Protocol

Each of the dismantled satellite EMS Dispatch centers are cross trained 9-1-1 call takers, and both fire and medical dispatchers and are fully capable of providing services to Albertans within the Alberta Health Services EMS Dispatch system.

It is clear by many of the recommendations in the AEPAC report, our conclusions support that the provincial dispatch centers are either overwhelmed or lacking in capacity and searching for solutions to maintain service. Therefore Minister, we respectfully request that the previous regional integrated EMS Dispatch model be reinstated as soon as possible, in pursuit of the best patient care.

Minister, we appreciate your sincere efforts regarding this vital issue. We invite you to discuss this matter further and ask you to contact Mayor Ken Johnston at 403-342-8155 to coordinate with our caucus.

Sincerely,



Ken Johnston
Mayor, City of Red Deer



Jyoti Gondek
Mayor, City of Calgary

Blaine Hyggen
Mayor, City of Lethbridge

Cc: Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of Alberta