



**The Ottawa-Carleton Public Employees' Union**  
**Syndicat Ottawa-Carleton de la fonction publique**

March 7, 2017

Dear Paramedic Members:

Like you, I am very concerned with the fact that the Ministry of Health has ordered changes to the end of shift and transfer of care protocols within the Ottawa Paramedic Service. These two measures were introduced many years ago and both have resulted in dramatic improvements in the quality of life for the paramedics of this City.

It is my view that the Ministry of Health staff lacked a full understanding of what these two provisions did before they ordered the City to make changes to them. For example, I don't believe that the Ministry staff understood the unique challenges that are created by Ottawa's use of a single base location for all urban ambulances. If they had understood, they would have realized that the elimination of the end of shift protocol will almost certainly result in crews being assigned calls while driving back to headquarters at the end of their shifts, thus requiring crews to work unwanted overtime.

Most importantly, the changes ordered by the Ministry will do nothing to address the problem of the City of Ottawa continually relying on its neighbouring ambulance services to provide care to its residents.

That problem will only be solved when the City recognizes that it needs to invest appropriately in its ambulance service. Today's problems are the direct result of five years of a hiring freeze that started in 2011, coupled with an almost 24% jump in call volume over that same period. The City's decision to add 2% more staff last year (deployed in non-transport capable vehicles) and to add a further 36 FTEs over the next two years will barely allow the system to keep pace with ongoing increases in the level of calls, and will do nothing to address the shortfall in staffing that has built up.

I have written to the Minister of Health to make him aware of my views on these issues and I have asked him to rescind the changes his staff ordered last week.

CUPE has also scheduled meetings with Chiefs DiMonte and Kelly to make sure they understand our concerns as well.

In the meantime, I would ask all of you to track your end of shift overtime for the next few weeks. That will ensure that if our discussions with the City and the Ministry prove fruitless, that we have evidence that may allow us to challenge these actions through the grievance and arbitration process.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Union office or your shop stewards.

In Solidarity,

Brian Madden, President  
CUPE 503

