

Briefing Note

Prepared for: Mayor and Councillors Title: Medevac Services Date prepared: May 12, 2015	Prepared by: Bob Couture Title: Executive Director Department: Community and Protective Services
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SUBJECT:

Medevac Services Update

BACKGROUND:

Phoenix Heli-Flight (Phoenix), with the support of Regional Emergency Services (RES) EMS personnel, has been providing daylight medevac services to the Municipality since 1992. This service was paid for by Alberta Health Services (AHS) through a fee-for-service arrangement.

In December 2013, Phoenix purchased a night flying capable helicopter and full 24/7 medevac coverage commenced in January of 2014. The technical nature and staffing requirements associated with the 24/7 service increased the costs significantly for Phoenix. The Municipality approved a grant funding agreement on June 25, 2014. This amount funded 50% of the fixed costs of \$3,000,000. Cenovus, Suncor, and Husky are currently funding approximately \$720,000. AHS is currently operating under the fee-for-service model of \$7,900 per flight/hour.

The goal was for Phoenix to create the Local Helicopter Emergency Response Organization (H.E.R.O.) Foundation to continue efforts towards becoming a registered charity to secure donations to support the 24/7 medevac services; and for AHS, industry stakeholders and the Municipality to form a sustainable funding model in the form of a tri-party agreement.

CURRENT STATUS:

To date, the H.E.R.O. Foundation has not been able to attain the charity designation. This is a slow process and Phoenix staff is working diligently to achieve that goal. Once this designation is achieved, the fund raising ability for H.E.R.O. should be significantly improved.

Repeated requests to AHS have gone unanswered and there isn't any formalized agreement with respect to the tri-party funding model. The recent government change in Alberta will further prolong this slow process, and perhaps jeopardize the fee-for-service arrangement.

With the current down turn in the local economic market, medevac volume has dropped; therefore, the current AHS fee-for-service structure will not cover the fixed costs.

Month	January	February	March	April
2014 Number of Responses	7	10	10	8
2015 Number of Responses	2	3	6	3

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Response times are significantly reduced with the H.E.R.O. model in comparison to traditional ground ambulance services alone. This service has been utilized 112 times since January 2014.

The loss of medevac service would drastically impact patient care and patient survival rates within the Municipality.

The June 2014 Council Report Administrative Recommendation provided for a review of the Municipality's continued financial support after one year of 24/7 medevac services. The Municipality has \$1,500,000 in the Corporate Finance budgeted for 2015 which was established.

NEXT STEPS/ACTION:

Prepare review for presentation at Audit Budget Committee meeting for commitment of \$1,500,000.

RES management will continue to work with AHS to formalize a sustainable funding model in the form of a tri-party agreement.