



Press release

For immediate release

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**Ambulance New Brunswick accepts the recommendations of
the Brady Report**

MONCTON – Ambulance New Brunswick accepts the recommendations brought forward by Mr. Richard Brady in his external review of a Fredericton Junction ambulance response that took place in April.

“Ambulance New Brunswick is absolutely committed to making sure a disastrous event like this does not happen again” states Arnold Rovers interim President and CEO of Ambulance New Brunswick. *“We are making sure every possible process that failed is examined and solutions implemented. The public needs to be completely confident that when they call 911 for medical assistance, an ambulance will arrive promptly.”*

As Mr. Brady stated in his report: “Many of the lessons learned from this tragedy are already being implemented. Strengthening of the training, policies and procedures and the improvement in resources will enable the service to learn from this event and be able to limit or prevent a reoccurrence.”

Our failure to ensure an ambulance arrived on the scene in an acceptable time has caused major changes in the way we operate. We want to thank Mr. Brady for his review and we want to assure the people of this province that we are dedicated to providing high-quality pre-hospital care for New Brunswickers.

Attached are specific responses to the Brady recommendations.

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It is requested that consideration be given to the following recommendations:

MCMC / Operations Management Structure – Control and Command

As Ambulance New Brunswick (ANB) has one dispatch centre that dispatches all ambulances throughout the province this centre is uniquely positioned to afford the opportunity for it to act as the overall command and control point for the operations and management of fleet and dispatch decisions and operations.

That ANB review its management and command structure with the purpose of having the day to day operational management, deployment and coordination of ambulance resources be vested in a management position on the floor of the MCMC and that this management position be staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week.

ANB accepts and is implementing this recommendation. The MCMC has assumed a command and control function of ambulance responses within New Brunswick. To manage that role, oversight for each call is vested in the management of the floor activities in the MCMC, and authority for managing responses will reside with that position.

Recent personnel changes and a realignment of management roles have been made to maximize the oversight of the center and to provide Communications Centre management with additional field operational expertise to design, manage, oversee and control the System Status Plan.

Floor Managers' schedules have been realigned to maximize their presence "on the floor" to ensure that operational management, deployment and coordination of ambulance resources is accomplished in accordance with the System Status Plan and to be able to react in real-time to rapidly evolving emergency situations as required.

System management – emergency calls vs. transfer calls

ANB has not achieved full paramedic staffing and is dealing with the provision of timely and efficient service for inter-facility transfer patients while at the same time working to maintain the required 90th percentile response times to emergency calls, both rural and urban.

That ANB with the assistance and coordination of the Department of Health review the decision making and methods for managing non-emergency, medically necessary inter-facility transfers and determine if alternative methods or deployment options can be utilized.

ANB accepts this recommendation. ANB is working with the Department of Health to assess all transfer requests, and to focus on medically necessary patient transfers. Further consultation with the Department of Health and the Provincial Medical Director is being held to develop a formal patient acuity assessment process to prioritize transfers which are appropriate for ambulance use.

That ANB review the System Status Plan including the placement of ambulances mandated by the plan with a view to reassessing the placement of ambulances in specific locales including conducting appropriate time/distance studies to assess the optimal placement locations to achieve the mandated response times.

ANB accepts this recommendation. ANB utilizes System Status Plan algorithms that have been modified on an ongoing basis since the initial deployment plan that assumed management of the ambulances on Dec 17, 2007. The SSP is constantly monitored to ensure that changes improved performance in each Region. Specifically we changed the ambulance deployment plan to improve coverage in the Fredericton Junction area.

ANB currently has no plans to change communities where ambulances are located but ANB has implemented an oversight policy which will include time/distance trials for any future changes of SSP stations or posts to ensure that improvements to the response time results are obtained without any detriment to ambulance positioning or potential for un-anticipated gaps in coverage. As well, potential locations will be assessed to ensure they meet safety requirements.

Policy and Procedure

That ANB review, create and / or strengthen the policies and procedures as per the footnoted findings to ensure timely notification and response to emergency ambulance calls.

ANB accepts this recommendation. ANB has modified procedures and policy to address this. Radio procedures have been changed, new processes introduced, and compliance requirements strengthened regarding the management of call notification and response to dispatch information. Specifically, the MCMC “controller” model recommended is being applied and routing decisions confirmed between the dispatchers and the paramedics before the response is initiated. As well, road condition data is entered daily into the CAD maps and applied to routing decision. Further changes and enhancements will be implemented by ANB as improvements to the technology components are introduced.

That ANB review and strengthen policy for paramedics and dispatchers to ensure that such policies are concise and easily understood and that measures be taken to affirm that policies and procedures are adhered to by both paramedics and MCMC staff.

ANB accepts this recommendation. Specifically, new policies have been introduced in the MCMC during training sessions with dispatchers, and oversight of the implementation of the new policies is being conducted by dispatch center managers. As well, Paramedics have received the applicable portions of these changes in clear, concise communications delivered as new Standard Operating Procedures and are being applied in the field. Finally, a new senior manager position has been created in the MCMC. The senior manager, selected because of his extensive knowledge of field systems and Systems Status Planning, will have ultimate control over the dispatch center’s processes. The manager is charged with the oversight, management, and compliance of both operations and dispatch activities.

That ANB, prior to having any policy and / or procedure take effect, provides timely and appropriate training for all affected staff on said policies to ensure the staff understand the policy and are appropriately tested for their understanding of and ability to implement and follow each policy and procedure.

ANB accepts this recommendation. Several policy changes were implemented expeditiously to ensure that the gaps identified during our review of the failure were closed.

For example, we changed the management of paramedic shift changes, ensuring a shift continues until a replacement ambulance arrives in the area and shift staggering to reduce the impact of shift changes is being further reviewed.

All policy and process changes were implemented with notice to all staff of the pending changes, before the effective dates and where education was required regarding changes in process, training of the affected staff in the MCMC was conducted prior to the implementation.

As well, all future policy and procedure changes will be carried out after the appropriate notice of the change and any requisite training to ensure proper implementation is conducted. All process changes will be included in our in-service packages prepared for paramedics and dispatchers and a policy to mandate testing in all future training in processes and procedures is being implemented by ANB.

Resources and tools

That ANB obtain the most up to date mapping resources (e.g. Elections New Brunswick) and ensure congruence between fleet and CAD mapping information.

ANB accepts this recommendation. ANB utilizes mapping data as provided by the Department of Public Safety for the core of its electronic mapping solutions within the CAD. The maps are enhanced with GIS data from municipalities regarding urban streets. Other layers are also added, such as hydrograph data, snow mobile trails and main logging trails to allow for geo-referenced calls and responses in very rural areas. The maps within the CAD are upgraded as soon as new data is received from these agencies. ANB will also review any available additional map sources to create the best New Brunswick map possible.

ANB is partnering with an independent GIS company to develop a comprehensive paper based map to be distributed to all land ambulance stations and vehicles, based and drawn directly from the data within the CAD. This will ensure a common reference point between paramedics and dispatchers. We anticipate that the first edition will be completed by July 31.

Concurrently, a project to provide real-time mapping (including road closures) to a computer located in the ambulance is also underway. Software, known as Visinet Mobile, and provided by the CAD vendor, will limit the need of front line paramedics to utilize paper based maps except as a back-up resource.

That ANB establishes a protocol for local station paramedics and managers to update mapping resources to reflect real time mapping and access changes that may occur.

ANB accepts this recommendation.

Data from the Department of Transportation is now utilized on a daily basis to geo-reference and locate road closures within the CAD map. That data, coupled with the AVL transmissions from the vehicles that geo-locates ambulances on the CAD map, allows the MCMC to notify crews if they are heading into an area with road closures and the MCMC and crew can plan alternate routes to minimize response times.

Real time access information from paramedics and managers regarding the accuracy of the map and changes in conditions, road extensions, civic address issues has always been informally applied. A new process formalizing that information to ensure data quality and inclusion in the CAD map is being developed.

That ANB with the assistance and coordination of the Department of Health research and develop tier response criteria and protocols to allow for the provision of efficient and timely medical first response.

ANB accepts this recommendation. ANB currently notifies three MFR agencies in the province and are investigating the potential to notify certain other agencies who have expressed an interest in this service. ANB is very interested in implementing a medical first responder support program that would establish the MFR tiered response within the province, with requisite medical oversight and reporting elements.

Training

That ANB review and strengthen the geographic training programs for paramedic and dispatch staff.

ANB accepts this recommendation. All paramedics and MCMC dispatchers will be participating in a map and navigation training program concurrently with the roll-out of ambulance based computer mapping (Visi-Net) as well as the backup paper based map under development. New hires will also receive this training module as part of their ANB orientation. The Atlantic Paramedic Academy is also being consulted on the feasibility of including a mapping component in the basic Paramedic training program.

That ANB review and strengthen the training program delivered to MCMC staff to enhance the ability of dispatch staff to be able to gather information, analyze such information, formulate decisions and deal with and manage EMS response issues as well as other crisis situations in a real time environment

ANB accepts this recommendation. In addition to supplemental training that has been developed and delivered to dispatchers regarding the new “controller” model of ambulance dispatch that is being developed by ANB, two senior managers from the Communications Centre will go to Ontario, to conduct a gap analysis between the ANB training program and the program developed by the Ontario Ministry of Health. As well they will share processes, training techniques, and dispatch training content. The MCMC training curriculum, policies and management processes will be modified and adapted as necessary to ensure leading methodologies and best practices are applied to the dispatching of emergency vehicles in New Brunswick