

OAFC Observations:

OPFFA Fire Medic Proposal



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Who is the OAFC

- Represent the Chief Officers of the Ontario Fire Service
- OAFC Vision: *Inspiring and Influencing a Safer Ontario*
- OAFC Mission Statement: *Leading Innovation and Excellence in Public and Life Safety*
- Trusted Advisor to Government on all matters pertaining to fire and life safety in Ontario
- Advisors to AMO on Fire Service issues
- OAFC is not a trade union



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Who is the OAFC

- 13 member Board
 - 1 President
 - 4 Vice-Presidents
 - 7 Directors
 - 1 Past-President
- 7 Staff
- Offices are located in Ajax, Ontario



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OAFC Advised of OPFFA Fire Medic Proposal

- OPFFA initially contacted the OAFC following their distribution of their "Fire-Medic" proposal at Queen's Park
- To build support, the OPFFA is meeting with Cabinet Ministers and Liberal MPPs.
 - We are unaware if meetings with Opposition members have occurred.
- The OPFFA asked to meet with the OAFC in April 2015, where OPFFA presented and explained their "Fire-Medic" proposal.
- This presentation will provide ESSC members with what the OAFC learned. The OAFC has not been involved in this issue otherwise.



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OPFFA Proposal - Background

- Described by the OPFFA as "Fire-Medic"
 - "Combined Firefighter / Paramedic role"
 - Appears to be limited to the expansion of symptom relief capabilities (administering various drugs on scene)
- OPFFA cites the increased resource requirements of maintaining separate functions of Fire and Paramedics
- OPFFA asserts that the purpose of the combined "Fire-Medic" is to improve patient outcomes through the expanded role of the Fire Service in emergency medical response



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OPFFA Proposal - Background

- Proposes the training of Fire Fighters in certain "symptom relief" treatment modalities that involve administering the following drugs:
 - ASA
 - Nitroglycerin
 - Ventolin
 - Epinephrine
 - Glucagon
 - Glucose Paste



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OPFFA Proposal - Background

- Additional advanced medical procedure training would be provided to Firefighters including:
 - Pulse Oximetry
 - Glucometry
 - Administration of Symptom Relief drugs
- This would be in addition to procedures currently provided by many Fire Fighters including:
 - Basic Life Support
 - Trauma Management
 - Semi-Automatic Defibrillation
 - Oxygen Therapy / Administration



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OPFFA Proposal - Background

- The term "Fire-Medic" exists in other Canadian services
 - Requires full qualification as both a Professional Firefighter and as an Advanced Care Paramedic to become a "Fire-Medic"
 - Common in Alberta
- It is likely that the use of the term "Fire-Medic" will be offensive to other groups including:
 - Other Canadian Fire Medics who hold Advanced Care Paramedic qualification
 - Paramedics in Ontario and across Canada



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Elements of the OPFFA Proposal

- Existing fire crews would be dispatched to medical emergencies as is normal practice under Tiered Response
- Upon arrival, Fire-Medics would be qualified to provide additional life-saving techniques
- Fire-Medics would provide patient care until Paramedics arrive
- OPFFA proposes that "Response Times" be calculated on a "system-wide" basis that includes the intervention of the Fire Medic and not on the Paramedic response time alone (ie the patient care clock starts/stops with the intervention of the Fire Medic)



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Elements of the OPFFA Proposal

- OPFFA contends that an additional 20 hours of training will be required to qualify an existing Fire Fighter to the "Fire-Medic" level
 - This training is proposed to be administered under the supervision of a Base Hospital Physician
- OPFFA proposal is to qualify existing Fire Fighters as "Fire-Medics"
 - Additional staffing is not part of the OPFFA proposal
- OPFFA contends that the creation of the "Fire-Medic" designation does not require any legislative change



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OPFFA Proposal – Implementation Plan

- OPFFA is recommending 8 pilot sites be established from the following municipalities:
 - Brampton
 - Peterborough
 - Guelph
 - Kitchener
 - Barrie
 - Mississauga
 - Sudbury
 - Oakville
 - St. Catharines
 - Vaughan
 - Burlington
 - Toronto
- OPFFA provided no rationale for how these municipalities were selected



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OPFFA Proposal – Implementation Plan

- Response times of "Fire-Medic" equipped fire apparatus would be compared to response times for Paramedics alone
- OPFFA contends that it is less expensive to train Firefighters as "Fire-Medics" than it is to hire additional Paramedics
 - This assumption is predicated on the notion that the Province would redirect Paramedic Services funding to the Fire Departments deploying "Fire-Medics"
- OPFFA proposes the use of the "Train-The-Trainer" model
 - Existing Paramedic-qualified Fire Fighters will train other Fire Fighters to achieve the "Fire-Medic" designation



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OPFFA Proposal – Implementation Plan

- OPFFA estimates the cost of training and equipping 8 first response fire apparatus with "Fire-Medics" to be \$30,900 in Year One
- OPFFA recommends that the existing EMS-TIF Advisory Committee be used for the assessment of the trial data
 - Representation on this committee includes:
 - OPFFA
 - MOHLTC
 - Emergency Health Services
 - OFMEM
 - OAFC



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Preliminary Analysis – OAFC

- OAFC vigorously defends the right and responsibility of Council to set service standards and levels for all Municipal Services, including fire and emergency services.
- OPFFA proposal appears to disregard the Canadian Medical Association's (CMA) National Occupational Competency Profiles for paramedicine.
 - Instead, the OPFFA calls for the creation of a new "Fire-Medic" designation as opposed to considering the application of the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) designation already in place under the CMA.



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Preliminary Analysis - OAFC

The following need to be fully considered:

- Impacts on patient care
- Assumption of liabilities
- Funding implications
- Legislative requirements
- Labour relations impacts between OPFFA / CUPE / OPSEU
- Governance implications in two-tier Governments
- Input and concurrence from Base Hospitals and Physicians
- Generally accepted research methodologies to ensure efficacy of data and results



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Conclusions

- Government has failed to consult with the following agencies on the impact of the OPFFA proposal:
 - AMO
 - ESSC
 - OAFC
 - OAPC
- OAFC will continue to work with AMO should the OPFFA's proposal receive further consideration by Government



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