

MEMBER REQUEST FOR DECISION

SPRING MUNICIPAL LEADERS' CAUCUS

DATE:

March 17, 2026

TOPIC:

Ground Ambulance Request for Proposal Consultation

RECOMMENDATION:

The Council from the Town of Stettler requests that the Alberta Municipalities:

- Advocate to the Government of Alberta and the Emergency Health Services Provincial Health Corporation (EHS PHC) to ensure that municipalities are fully consulted during the development of the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP) for ground ambulance services; and
- Urge the Government of Alberta and EHS PHC to ensure that the future contractual framework maintains, at minimum, current levels of service, response capacity, and community coverage.

BACKGROUND:

Ground ambulance service in Alberta is currently delivered through a mix of direct delivery and a network of approximately 30 contracted service providers operating under agreements now administered by the Emergency Health Services Provincial Health Corporation (EHS PHC). These contracts define response capacity, deployment expectations, staffing requirements, fleet standards, and performance reporting obligations. The existing agreements have been extended multiple times, resulting in prolonged reliance on legacy contract structures that no longer reflect current operational pressures, call volumes, or rural service realities.

EHS PHC has announced its intention to issue a new RFP to establish future ground ambulance service contracts once the current agreement expires. While the development of a new contractual framework presents an opportunity to modernize and stabilize service delivery, it also carries significant risk if municipalities are not meaningfully consulted. The development of a new procurement framework represents a significant system redesign event, with the potential to alter provider selection, deployment models, performance metrics, and integration requirements. Any such changes will directly affect municipal emergency response systems, particularly in rural regions where ambulance availability is already constrained by long travel distances, limited unit redundancy, and increasing off-load delays at regional hospitals.

Municipalities have observed measurable impacts from centralized dispatch, province-wide resource pooling, and the escalation of inter-facility transfer demand. These pressures have contributed to reduced local coverage, increased reliance on fire departments for uncompensated medical first response, and extended periods where no ambulance is available within a reasonable response radius. Urban municipalities in rural Alberta have



repeatedly emphasized that service continuity depends on maintaining strong operational relationships between contracted ambulance providers and local emergency services, including shared training, coordinated incident response, and real-time communication during major events.

The Town of Stettler, like many urban municipalities in rural settings, relies on predictable ambulance coverage and close coordination between EMS, rural emergency rooms, fire services, and other first responders. Ensuring that the Government of Alberta and EHS PHC engage rural municipalities during the RFP development process is essential to maintaining current service levels, preserving local integration, and preventing further degradation of rural emergency medical response capacity.

Given the critical importance of ground ambulance services to public safety, municipalities must have a voice in shaping the next generation of service contracts. Ensuring that the Government of Alberta and EHS PHC engage municipalities during the RFP development process will help maintain current service levels, protect local integration, and support the long-term sustainability of emergency medical services in rural Alberta.