



Auditor: Cypress Regional Health Authority needs to analyze ambulance response times and update contracts with ambulance service providers

REGINA, Sask., December 8, 2016 – Cypress Regional Health Authority (Cypress RHA) needs to actively monitor and regularly analyze its ambulance response times to determine how it can reach its targets more often, says Provincial Auditor Judy Ferguson in her *2016 Report – Volume 2*, tabled today. In her Report, Ferguson also recommends that the Ministry of Health formally assess the distribution of ambulance services in the province, which would determine if they are optimally located to meet patient needs.

Cypress RHA delivers ambulance services to about 45,000 residents who live within its region of about 44,000 square kilometres. Cypress RHA has ground ambulance services located in 12 communities. It operates these services directly in seven of these communities; it hires ambulance service providers, under contract with the RHA, to operate in five communities to help provide ambulance coverage in the region. It has target response times for ground ambulance operators of 8 minutes 59 seconds for urban centres and under 30 minutes for rural areas.

The audit found Cypress RHA's ambulances responded within 30 minutes of the emergency call, on average, 83% of the time in 2015-16—below the provincial target of 90% of the time. Four rural-area ambulance operators met the provincial target, on average, between 60% to 69% of the time in 2015-16. When target response times were not met, Cypress RHA did not obtain completed incident reports to enable it to determine the reasons for the delays and what needs to be done. "In rural Saskatchewan, ambulance services are critical in emergency situations," notes Ferguson. "Having quick response times and qualified ambulance staff contributes to the best possible outcome for the patient."

In addition, the audit found Cypress RHA's emergency medical personnel were properly trained and qualified, and its ambulances were properly maintained and equipped. However, its contracts with ambulance service providers do not include service quality expectations such as response time targets or periodic reporting on them. "Having robust contracts would assist Cypress RHA in holding service providers accountable for the ambulance services they provide," says Ferguson.

Additional issues highlighted in the Provincial Auditor's Report include:

- › Planning for inmate capacity of adult correctional facilities at the Ministry of Justice
- › Delivering English as an Additional Language programming in Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81
- › Providing special needs equipment to persons with disabilities at the Ministry of Health
- › Securing personal information at the Public Employees Benefits Agency
- › Removing historical artifacts at the Western Development Museum

Further details regarding the key topics covered in Volume 2 of the 2016 Report can be found in the accompanying [Backgrounder](#). The full Provincial Auditor's *2016 Report – Volume 2* is available online at www.auditor.sk.ca.



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