

From: Annah Hamilton-Simard **On Behalf Of** Stephen Thatcher

Sent: November 30, 2021 11:14 AM

To: Aaron Stone ; Aimee Watson ; Al Radke ; Andrew Hory ; akaehn ; Barry Pages ; Bill Newell ; Bob Lapham ; Brad Sperling ; Brad Unger ; Brian Carruthers ; Brian Reardon ; Charles Hamilton ; Colin Plant ; Courtney Kirk ; curtis.helgesen ; Dave Leitch ; David Sewell ; Dean McKinley ; Diane Langman ; Doug Chapman ; Douglas Holmes ; Gail Given ; mayor ; Greg Fletcher ; Jason Lum ; Jen Ford ; Jen Ford1 ; Jennifer Kinneman ; Jerry Dobrovolny ; Jesse Ketler ; jmartin ; John Jack ; John MacLean ; Karla Kozakevich ; director.kgillis ; Kevin Acton ; Kevin Flynn ; Lori Pratt ; Margo Wagner ; Mark Andison ; Melany Helmer ; Patrick Brabazon ; Philip Germuth ; Philip Germuth1 ; Rob Gay ; Rob Gay1 ; Ron Poole ; Russ Hotsenpiller ; Russell Dyson ; Samuel Schooner ; Satvinder Singh Dhaliwal ; shildebrand ; Shawn Dahlen ; Shawn Tomlin ; Stuart Horn ; Teri Fong ; Tyler Brown

Subject: Important operational changes to ambulance call transfers

Good morning,

I'm writing to inform you about a change to the call transfer process between E-Comm and BC Emergency Health Services (BCHES), the organization responsible for ambulance dispatch, which will take effect on a temporary basis as of December 1, 2021.

As I have highlighted in previous communication, E-Comm has been experiencing increasing delays in transferring 9-1-1 callers requesting ambulance to BCEHS. These delayed transfers continue to have a critical impact on all 9-1-1 callers, not just those requiring medical assistance, as existing protocols require E-Comm call takers to wait on the line until a transfer has been completed, leaving them unavailable to answer other incoming emergency calls. This has seen some callers waiting a long period of time to reach a 9-1-1 call taker.

E-Comm's leadership team has worked closely with BCEHS to identify solutions for the resulting wait times experienced on 9-1-1 throughout these challenges. Despite the implementation of several joint initiatives and mitigation strategies, E-Comm continues to see frequent delays in transferring callers in medical distress in a timely manner. We are now at the point where new measures are required to ensure our staff are able to answer 9-1-1 calls as quickly as possible to get British Columbians the help they urgently require from police, fire and ambulance.

Acting on the advice of BCEHS, and following discussions with senior representatives of the police and fire agencies in the province, we will be introducing a new process for transferring requests for the ambulance service. This process will allow 9-1-1 call takers to disconnect from ambulance calls after transferring and reaching BCEHS' automated recording. Callers will be advised that they are in the queue for ambulance and that the 9-1-1 call taker needs to disconnect so they can answer other incoming calls. Overall, this change will help free up more of our call takers to answer and process emergency calls more quickly – particularly helping to safeguard urgent requests for police and fire services, which we know combined make up approximately 70% of all 9-1-1 calls.

This policy is temporary to ensure 9-1-1 service level targets are consistently being met and both E-Comm and BCEHS will revisit the need for this policy on a monthly basis. As sudden influxes of 9-1-1 calls happen without warning, this new transfer procedure will be followed at all times and will apply to both BCEHS' priority queue and regular queue.

We firmly believe that this is a crucial step to alleviate some of the pressure on the 9-1-1 system and on our staff, who have struggled immensely being unable to provide guidance or advice to callers in medical distress. This change is one we feel is necessary and the best option for the safety of British Columbians.

Should you have questions regarding this new transfer process in the days to come, please contact me.

Thank you,

Stephen

Stephen Thatcher, *Vice President, Operations*

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