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RVH and County of Simcoe Paramedics Services working together to reduce Ambulance Offload Times

Working with its partners at County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) has significantly reduced its Ambulance Offload Times, an important step towards improving the patient experience for area residents.

Ambulance Offload Times are measured from the moment a patient enters an emergency department (ED) by ambulance to the time when their care is transferred from paramedics to ED staff. While the provincial average sits at 54 minutes, RVH's current offload times are an average of 25.6 minutes, down from 45.7 minutes in 2016/17.

RVH and County of Simcoe Paramedics meet quarterly to review progress and update each other on any changes to either organization to ensure ambulance offload times remain a top priority. Recently, RVH's Emergency department was recognized as a 'Most Improved Ambulance Offload Performer' by the Provincial Emergency Department Clinical Lead, Dr. Howard Ovens. Following this recognition, RVH will share best practices and strategies with emergency departments across the province.

"RVH has one of the busiest Emergency departments in the province, seeing more than 88,000 visits annually," says Treva McCumber, vice president, Patient Programs and chief nursing executive, RVH. "Yet despite an average monthly increase in patient visits, RVH saw a 26 per cent reduction in its Ambulance Offload Times. This significant reduction is due to excellent collaborative work between County of Simcoe Paramedics and RVH's Emergency department team. It's important work that's having a positive outcome for our patients across the County."

Additional contributors to this success include collaborative efforts in staffing of a Dedicated Offload Delay Nurse, formalized daily communication channels between Platoon Supervisors and Resource Nurses who participate in a twice daily system status report, and enhanced patient tracking from ambulance arrival to patient transfer of care in the hospital.

"During the past five years County of Simcoe Paramedic Services has worked closely and collaboratively with our partners at RVH and other area hospitals to improve the flow of patients through the emergency department and reduce offload delays," says Andrew Robert, Director and Chief, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services. "Our paramedics respond to more than 67,000 calls each year, and when seconds can make a difference in the lives of our residents the quicker paramedics can transfer care of their patients to hospital staff the quicker they can be available to respond to 911 calls in the community."

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About RVH: Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre is the largest hospital in the region of North Simcoe Muskoka serving a population of 450,000 residents. RVH's team of over 430 physicians, 2,500 employees and 750 volunteers provides exceptional care and specialty services to almost half a million residents, including cancer care, stroke services, regional cardiac care, orthopedics, regional renal program, intensive care, regional adult and child and youth mental health and interventional radiology. RVH is focused on delivering high-quality, safe care that puts patients and their families first. For more information visit www.rvh.on.ca

About County of Simcoe: County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.