

Joint Media Release – February 3, 2023

PATIENT TRANSPORT INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

The Councils of the Municipal District of Willow Creek, Town of Nanton, Town of Stavely, Town of Fort Macleod and Town of Claresholm announce the adoption of the “Operating Guideline for Transporting Patients During Prolonged Response Times” for their respective communities.

911 call requests for Alberta Health Services Emergency Medical Services (AHS EMS) have increased 30% in recent years. This has posed considerable challenges and, in some cases, has resulted in delayed response times. AHS has recently announced changes undertaken as a result of their review of Emergency Medical Service delivery including additional EMS units, utilization of non-ambulance transfer resources, recruitment and retention strategies for staff and other initiatives that will improve service delivery. Collectively our communities recognize these efforts and applaud the review process, recommendations and implementation of change.

Recently a significant policy change by AHS will provide additional assurance of safety to our citizens through collaboration between our municipalities and AHS to utilize our municipal fire department resources to transport patients during periods of prolonged AHS EMS response times.

Beginning immediately fire departments may now consult with ‘on-line medical control’ through our regional dispatch service and, if AHS Emergency Medical Resource response is delayed, our fire departments may receive permission to transport the patient to the nearest hospital.

Our region is well prepared for this new life saving measure. In 2014 the M.D. of Willow Creek purchased 3 Emergency Response Units (ambulances) as part of a pilot project with AHS. These units are located in Nanton, Claresholm and Fort Macleod and are staffed by professional volunteer firefighters, and will now be available for use in this Patient Transport initiative. Currently these units are used for Medical First Response however until this time they have not been utilized for transporting critically ill or injured patients.

Our communities congratulate Alberta Health Services and the Government of Alberta for adopting this practical change to its policies which will enable our local professional volunteer Fire Services to provide efficient, safe and timely service to our citizens in their greatest hour of need.

This new Patient Transport capability is now in effect. Monitoring of the use of this new capability by our fire departments will be regularly reviewed to ensure its correct and complete application.

Media Inquiries may be made to any of the following Municipalities:

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