



## MEDIA RELEASE

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***For immediate release***  
***Feb. 5, 2025***

Here are the highlights from the Lanark County Council meeting held Jan. 29, 2025.

**New Medical Priority Dispatch System Coming to Area:** Lanark County Council accepted a report regarding the new Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), which will see changes in how 911 calls are managed for ambulance services that fall under the Kingston Central Ambulance Communication Centre (including Lanark County).

At the corporate services committee meeting earlier this month, Lanark County Paramedic Service Chief Travis Mellema explained the new system assures the best use of limited resources, with “the right resource for the right patient at the right time.” Dispatchers gather more information from callers in order to prioritize emergency medical situations and deploy resources efficiently and effectively. They also provide medical instruction to callers.

“MPDS is expected to lead to significant benefits for the Lanark County Paramedic Service and the residents of Lanark County,” Mellema said. He said this includes giving the most urgent calls top priority, which results in better patient outcomes; reducing the need to drive lights-and-sirens (for lower priority calls), which improves paramedic and public safety by reducing the risk of traffic-related accidents; and assuring best use of resources.

Mellema explained the new system will change the types of questions asked when someone calls 911. Wait times for an ambulance may be longer, depending on the nature of the call, but callers would receive call backs to determine changes in the situation. As well, triage of transfers of patients from hospital-to-hospital will be adjusted. Public information about the changes has started to be publicized in local media and on LCPS social media channels. For more information, contact Kurt Greaves, CAO, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1101.

**County Sets Rent-Geared-to-Income Local Priority Policy:** Lanark County Council approved a policy and directed staff to launch a local priority for the rent-geared-to-income (RGI) centralized waiting list for a trial period of one year.

At the community services committee meeting earlier this month, Housing Services Manager Kaitlyn Murray explained the county administers social housing resources for RGI assistance, which is governed by both provincial and local rules. There is one provincially legislated priority under the Housing Services Act - for applicants fleeing domestic abuse or human trafficking. This places these applicants above all others on the centralized waiting list. Locally established priorities come next, followed by chronological order based on the application date.



## MEDIA RELEASE

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Murray explained local priorities can address local pressures and support groups that are disproportionately disadvantaged. "Chronic homelessness represents a particularly vulnerable and marginalized population," she said, noting as of October 2024, 44 households on the county's by-name list for homelessness were deemed chronically homeless, with an average of 38 per month. Pressures include rising homelessness rates, limited availability of affordable housing, high demand for RGI housing (which exceeds the supply and results in extensive waiting lists), and persistent socioeconomic inequality.

The local priority will be allocated to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness from the by-name list. Staff can make such an offer for one in every five offers being made to those on the centralized waiting list. For a person meeting the threshold for chronic homelessness, the by-name list committee would provide the necessary support to complete the priority application process. Based on 2024 data, Murray estimated the distribution would be 43 per cent for the provincial priority, 45 per cent from the centralized waitlist and 11 per cent for the new local priority. "It is important to note that determining these numbers is difficult due to the many factors at play." The trial period for the pilot project begins April 1. For more information, contact Kaitlyn Murray, Housing Services Manager, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2401.

**Child Care Expansion Plan and Start-up Grant Funding Approved:** Lanark County Council has accepted revisions to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) expansion plan targets for this year and authorized start-up grant funding of \$704,4000 to be allocated to the Municipality of Mississippi Mills for the expansion of its child care centre.

At the community services committee meeting earlier this month, Director of Social Services Emily Hollington explained further revisions to the county's CWELCC expansion plan were needed due to space allocation updates. Changes to CWELCC guidelines meant child-care licensees not participating in the CWELCC program were not eligible to receive county funding they may have previously had, such as wage enhancements and general operating funding. Funding changes for 2025, however, allowed for child-care providers that had previously opted not to enroll could have a final opportunity to apply in order to ensure they could still receive routine funding from the county. Perth Children's House and the Cooperative Nursery School of Almonte have now opted in.

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills was approved for the creation of 78 new child-care spaces and, with its expansion plan, applied for the start-up grant funding to support the creation of the new spaces. Another provider withdrew an expression of interest application for 16 new spaces. This has resulted in the revised expansion plan targets, Hollington explained.



## MEDIA RELEASE

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The expansion and the start-up grant supports creation of new spaces for infant, toddler and pre-school age groups, Hollington said. The grant is intended for facilities to be created, retrofitted, renovated or expanded. The county approved granting \$704,400 (its remaining allocation) to Mississippi Mills for its expansion project. CWELCC grants are 100 per cent provincially and federally funded. For more information, contact Emily Hollington, Director of Social Services, at 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 2101

**Upcoming Meetings: County Council, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 5 p.m.;** Community Services, Feb. 12 (following County Council); Corporate Services, Feb. 12 (following Community Services). **County Council, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 5 p.m.;** Public Works, Feb. 26 (following County Council); Economic Development, Feb. 26 (following Public Works). Watch for details about public access to meetings on agendas and through online notifications. For more information, contact 1-888-9-LANARK, ext. 1502. Like "LanarkCounty1" on Facebook and follow "@LanarkCounty1" on Instagram!

- 30 -