

EMS Dispatch Consolidation



Presentation to Calgary City Council
November 2, 2020

What is EMS Dispatch Consolidation?

Dispatch Consolidation refers to the consolidation of EMS dispatch services **only**.

- Local Police, Fire dispatch does not change.
- 911 callers will notice no change.
- Ambulance service will not be delayed; this just changes where the call is answered.

Moves Alberta's EMS system toward completion of 10 year project.

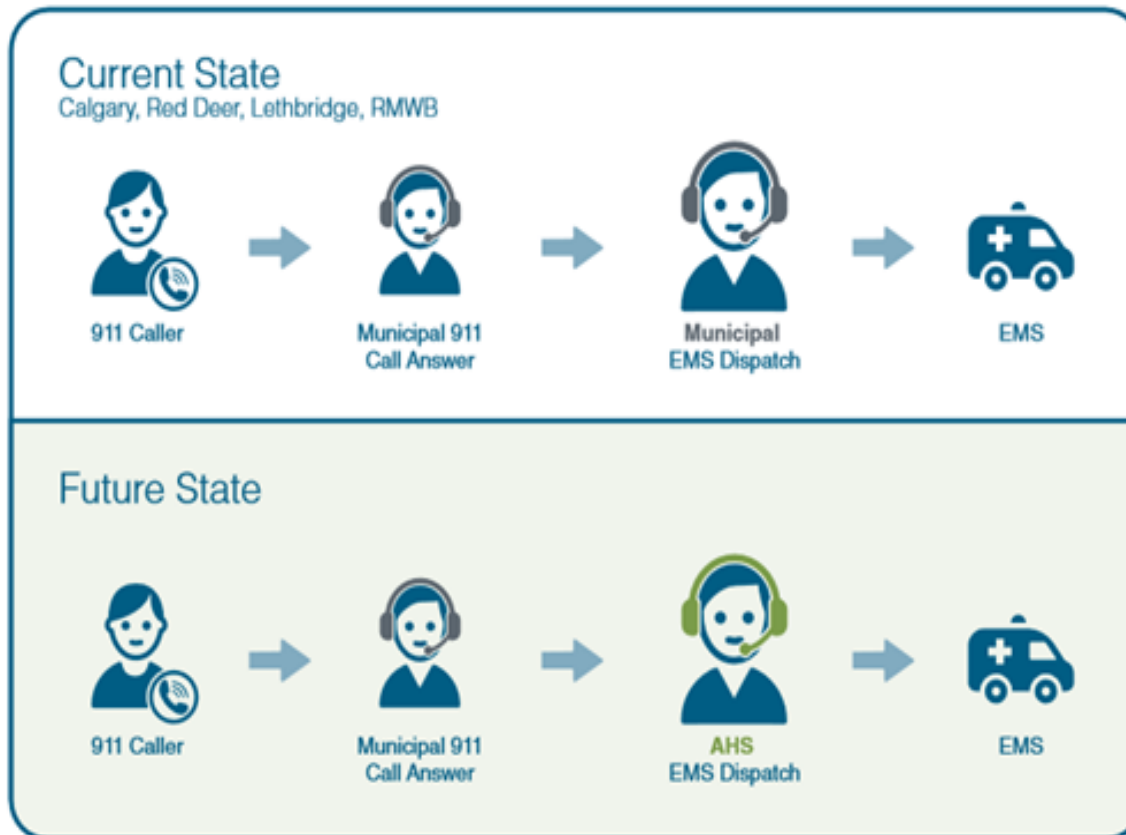
60% of Alberta is already dispatched this way.

The work done by four municipally-run satellite sites in Calgary, Lethbridge, Red Deer and the Municipality of Wood Buffalo will be brought into one of the three AHS EMS dispatch sites:

- Northern Communications Centre (NCC), in Peace River
- Southern Communications Centre (SCC), in Calgary
- Central Communications Centre (CCC), in Edmonton

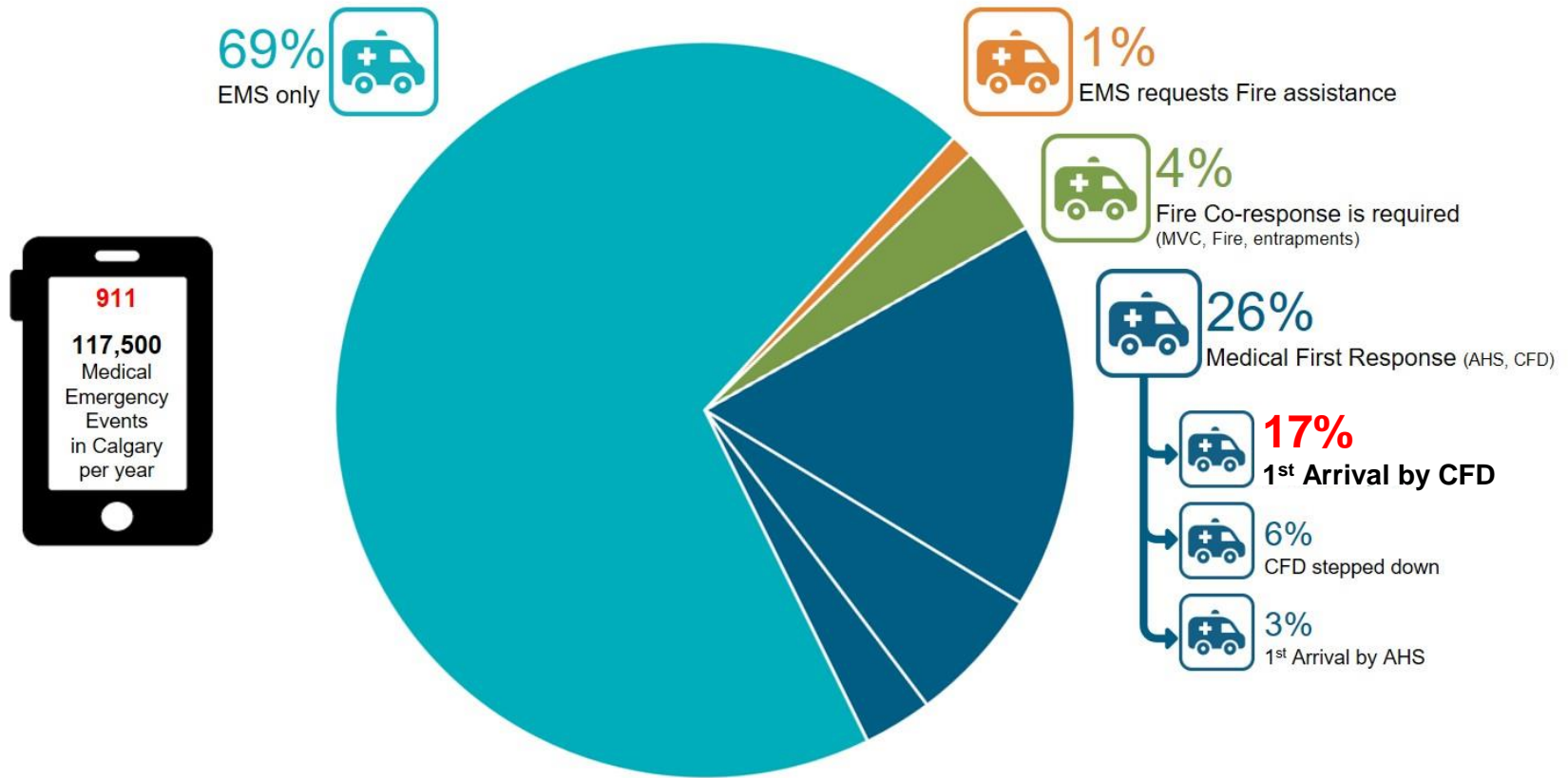
How ambulances are dispatched

EMS Dispatch Consolidation – EMS Call Flow Before/After



All dispatch centres already use AHS Computer systems, software and resources to dispatch ambulances

Annual Fire Participation Rate on Medical Events in Calgary



Data Source: CAD to CAD interface

The Facts

Perception: CFD arrives first 50% of the time

Fact: CFD arrives first on just 17% of EMS calls

Perception: Switch will delay municipal Fire or Police Dispatch.

Fact: Response times will not change. MFR will be notified the same way for the same call types as today.

Perception: AHS is making this change to reduce MFR attendance on calls.

Fact: Response plans and requirements for MFR will not change as a result of consolidation.

Best practice in high performance EMS systems includes appropriate MFR response.



MFR Response times

Myth: There will be a delay in MFR response times.

Facts: We greatly value our partnerships with medical first response partners.

The Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) to CAD interface AHS employs with the four municipalities which is used to request Fire/Rescue or MFR response will remain in place.

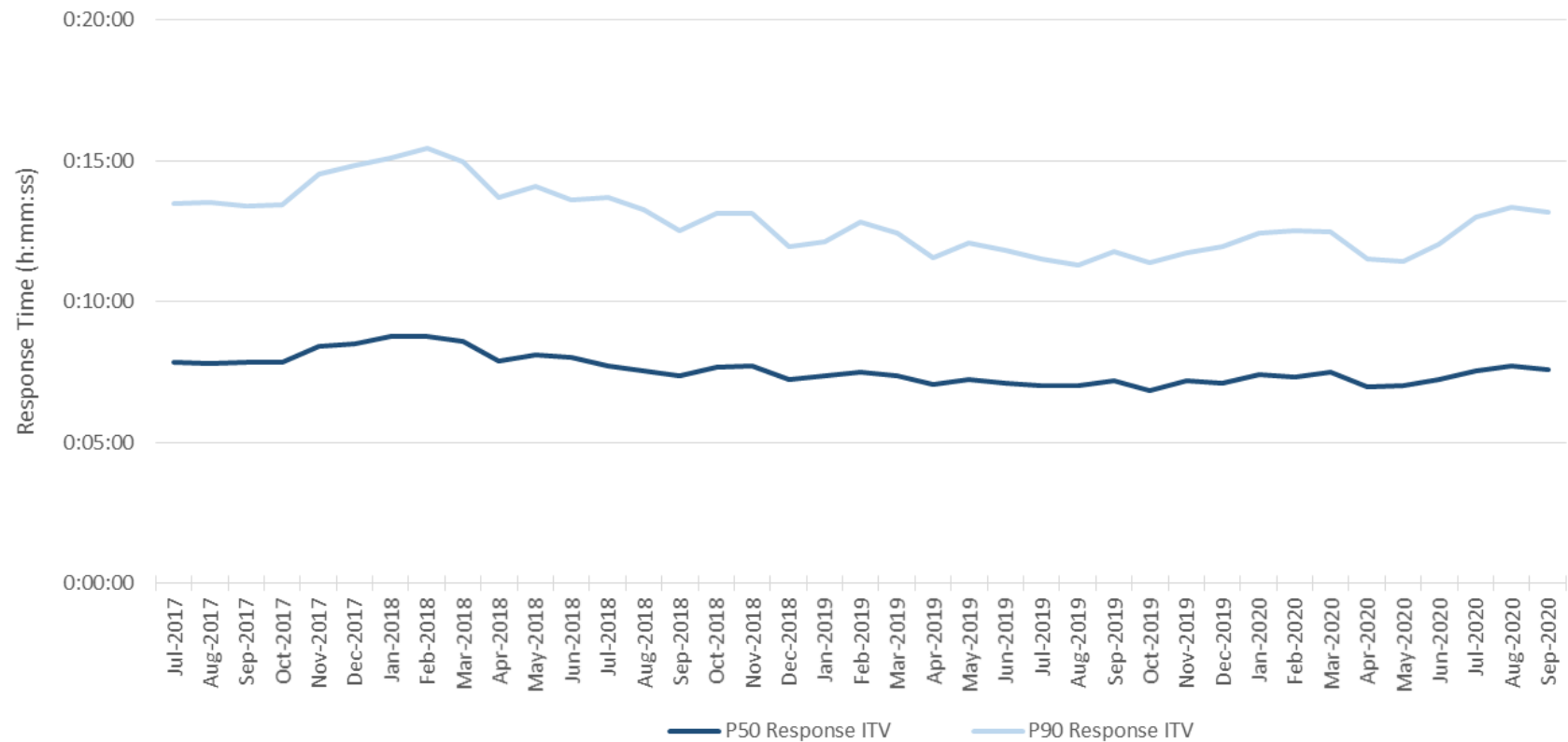
- MFR is notified **automatically** using CAD to CAD.
- All relevant location and medical information is included
- Notification is **instantaneous**.
- CAD to CAD was implemented in 2011, performed with minimal interruption.
- The interfaces successfully manage tens of thousands requests annually for medical first response.

Myth: Response times will increase.

Facts:

- Response times have remained largely stable since EMS took over dispatching 60% of the province.
- The dispatch time is actually a very small fraction of total response time.
- There are many factors in overall response times:, weather, road conditions, traffic, hospital offload delays etc.

City of Calgary EMS Response Times



Date range: July 2017-September 2020

Data Source: SPI, CAD to CAD interface

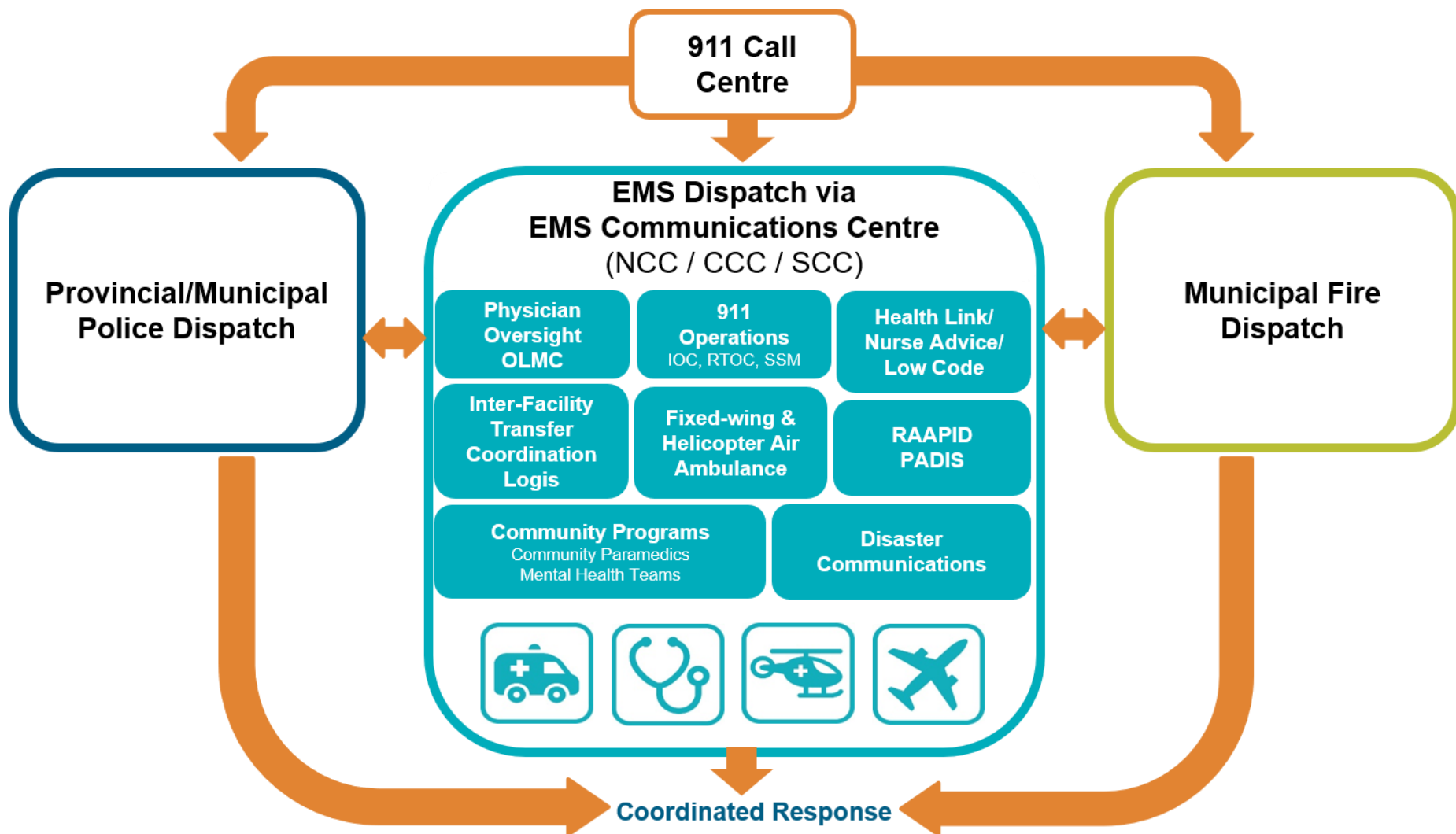
Facts:

- We are here to be a supportive partner and gladly assist other agencies when they are not able to handle high call volumes.
- AHS EMS already handles many 911 EMS calls from the Calgary 911 centre.
- Calgary 911 staff have either relocated to the AHS Southern Communications Centre (SCC) or handed all EMS events to the centre several times **with no change in response performance.**

Examples where Calgary 911 sent EMS calls to AHS.....

- September 10, 2014 – Snowtember
- October 17, 2017 – Wind storm
- November 2 to 5, 2018 – Power outage moved to SCC to work
- December 3 to January 23, 2018 – Moved to SCC for renovation work (52 days)
- September & November 2019 – Power outage moved to SCC
- June 13, 2020 – Hail storm

Integrated Dispatch, Coordinated Response



Consolidated Dispatch benefits

- Consolidation will also allow AHS to save more than \$6 million, annually.
 - This is a fiscally responsible transition that will maintain patient safety and ensure consistency & sustainability of dispatch services across all communities.
 - Allows EMS to better integrate with the healthcare system as a whole.
 - Allows Calgary 911 to focus on 911 call response service.
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Dispatch Best Practice: Having backup is important

- AHS EMS currently operates three dispatch centres:
 - Northern Communications Centre (NCC) in Peace River,
 - Southern Communications Centre (SCC) in Calgary, and
 - Central Communications Centre (CCC) in Edmonton.
 - Each of these sites is a backup to both of the others ensuring that no matter where a call originates there is always someone available to answer the call
 - There are 21 other 911 call centres in Alberta and each has an out of jurisdiction backup partner
 - If a power failure or line cut resulted in 911 calls not getting through, the City has no means to redirect those calls and they would go unanswered.
 - Calgary 911's primary and backup sites are both located in Calgary
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Staffing considerations

- AHS EMS, using our three communications centres, is able to handle additional EMS call volumes.
 - 25 additional staff are being hired
 - AHS EMS is prepared to move ahead on schedule with no delays. The transition to a consolidated system will take place in early 2021.



United States 911 Commission Recommendations (July 2004)

Myth: Need to have services in one room as the 9/11 Commission Report says all police, fire & EMS dispatch should stay in one room.

Facts:

- Recommendations were based on a first response model with poor health system integration.
 - Used expensive parallel medical transport solutions –system is structured & governed differently in Alberta.
 - Recommendations support interoperability between emergency agencies and responders.
 - This is achieved in Alberta with CAD to CAD & provincial Alberta First Responder Radio Communication System (AFRRCS).
 - Provincial EMS best practice model adopted in other provinces (BC, Nova Scotia, Ontario) and internationally including Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand.
 - 9/11 Commission report is outdated. In the 20+ years since 9/11 it has not taken technological advances into account.
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EMS Dispatch Facts

- People who call 911 will notice absolutely no change.
 - Patient safety is at the core of every decision we make. This includes our approach to dispatching of EMS services across Alberta.
 - Response times will not increase.
 - MFR/Fire department response will not increase.
 - Communication with first response partners will not change.
 - Consolidation allows EMS to better integrate with the healthcare system as a whole.
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