



FACT SHEET

WHO: Foothills Regional 911 Commission, which serves 26 municipalities and 33 fire departments/stations in Southern Alberta.

WHAT: Urgent request to Alberta Health Services (AHS) to reinstate emergency medical services EMS dispatch to Foothills Regional 911 Call Centre.

WHEN: **Immediate action is required.** On February 21, 2017 AHS began dispatching EMS calls to Southern Alberta Municipalities with no planning, cooperation or explanation of emergency protocols to Foothills Regional 911 Commission, its municipalities and fire departments. The transition has been fraught with many problems, errors and delays in emergency response for ambulance and fire medical responses. The NDP Government refuses to correct the problems with proven solutions.

WHY: Since October 2009 when the EMS dispatch component was removed from the Foothills Regional 911 Commission and centralized in Calgary, there have been many **issues and problems in ambulance response** to residents living in rural southern Alberta.

The fragmented dispatch has resulted in **lengthy response times and gaps in coverage due to poor rural area familiarization**. Since the **February 21, 2017 launch date**, there have been delays of up to one hour to notify our Centre to send a fire department medical response, when an ambulance was not available. Numerous errors have occurred such as not sending the appropriately-located ambulance or sending an ambulance to a wrong address. **Every second counts and lives are at risk.**

For rural Albertans, there is not a single, coordinated fire/EMS response when you dial 911. Most major urban centres have negotiated with the province to maintain their coordinated services, operating as AHS satellites centres. With the diversity of calls received at a 911 call centre, flexibility to adapt to the situation and recognition of threats is of the utmost importance. When a 911 call is received and **an organized response occurs in the same centre, this risk is significantly reduced.** There are also **significant cost-savings and lives saved in emergency response coordination and efficiency.**

There is urgency to address this issue for southern Albertans. Currently, those living in Foothills Regional 911 Commission service areas face **uncertainty in both first response and poorly coordinated dispatch** out of the **AHS South Communications Centre.**

SOLUTION: Foothills Regional 911 Commission has a proven solution and can immediately provide simultaneous fire-ambulance dispatch. This makes sense. **They are urgently requesting that Minister Sarah Hoffman return emergency medical dispatch to the Commission immediately.**



SUMMARY STATISTICS

Recognized and accepted Industry Standard as per the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1221:

“Processing times for emergency calls requiring emergency medical dispatch questions and pre-arrival medical instructions is **“90 seconds 90 percent of the time”**. This standard would include Medical Fire Responses (MFR).

For the purposes of this briefing, the time calculations are from the time an EMS call is transferred to AHS EMS Dispatch by Foothills 911, and the time the call is sent back to Foothills 911 via Mobile Data Terminals for a Fire First Response or Co-Response. These times **DO NOT** include the additional 30 seconds to complete the transfer from Foothills 911 to AHS EMS Dispatch.

Only 4% of emergency calls requiring MFR are being sent to Foothills 911 within the industry standard time frames.

96% of all AHS Dispatch notifications to Foothills 911 for MFR are not being completed within the 90 seconds as recommended by NFPA 1221 standard.

73% of all AHS Dispatch notifications to Foothills 911 for MFR are 60 seconds over the time of 90 seconds as recommendation by NFPA 1221 standard

56% of all AHS Dispatch notifications to Foothills 911 for MFR are **double (180 seconds or 3 minutes)** over the 90 seconds as recommendation by NFPA 1221.

The longest delay experienced since the transition to AHS Dispatch on February 21, 2017, was 64 minutes.

Single-point Dispatch from FRESA would significantly reduce these times by the following:

- Eliminates the 30 second transfer to AHS Dispatch time
- Allows immediately dispatch of MFR as soon as the medical priority triage indicates MFR is required – eliminates the significant delay time for AHS to notify Foothills 911.

Albertans are invited to visit FixRural911Dispatch.com for information and a sample letter to send to the Minister’s office and local MLA’s.



SUMMARY INCIDENTS [3 EXAMPLES]

9 Month-old Baby with Severe Breathing Problems – The first ambulance dispatched was from Brooks (2 hours away). Five minutes later AHS dispatch sends an ambulance from Calgary. **One hour and four minutes** later this Medical Fire Response is sent to Foothills 911 (FRESC) for dispatch of medically trained fire responders that were only 6.5 km from scene of this emergency. This baby could have died. Response from AHS management was “we thought Calgary 911 was sending the call to Foothills”.

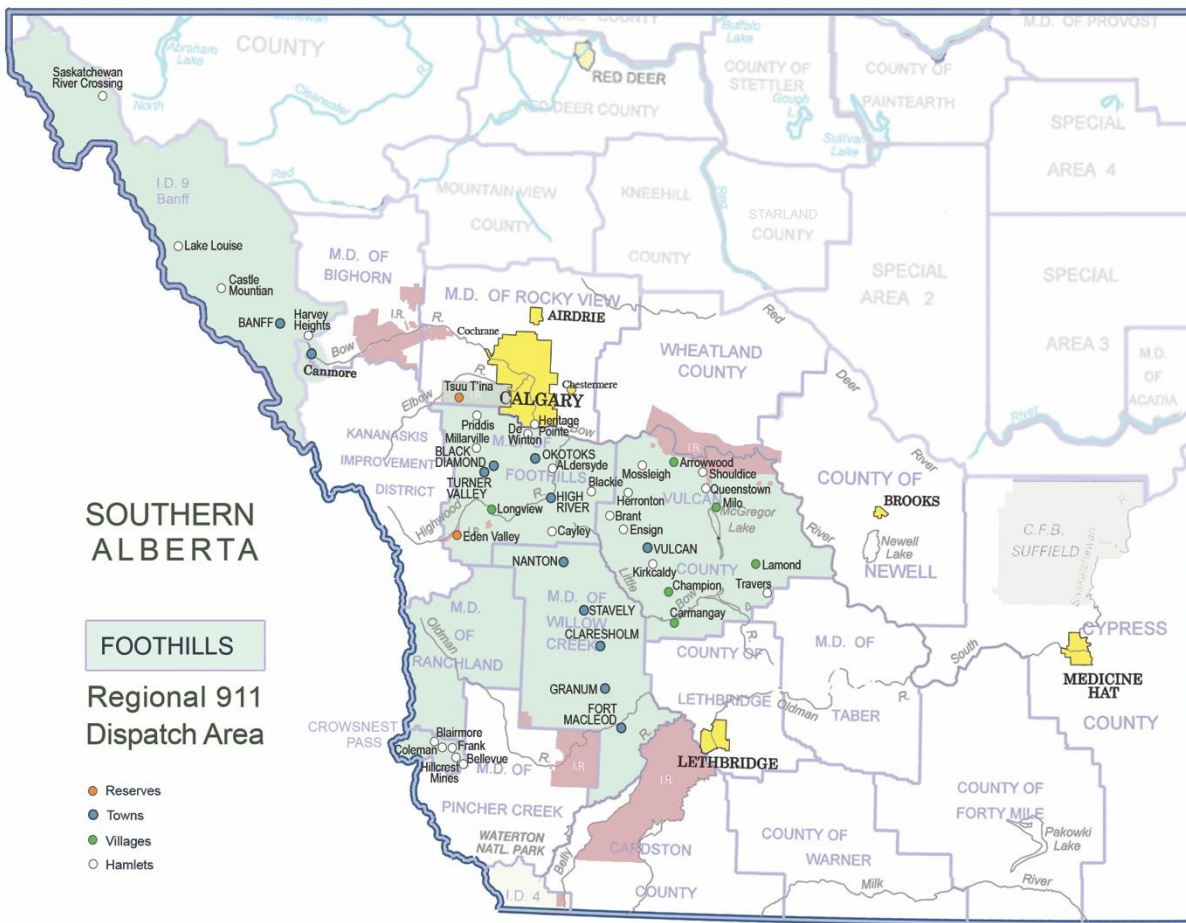
Not Breathing Effectively – Severe Asthma Attack - This call should have been an automatic, simultaneous Ambulance and Fire response within seconds of receiving the 911 call. It took AHS EMS dispatch **34 minutes** to forward the call to Foothills 911 for the dispatch of Fire resources. Response from AHS management was “This one is on us – someone left the room”.

Inaccurate Dispatch Information and Communication Issues - Foothills 911 received a request from AHS EMS Dispatch for a Fire response to Banff Mineral Springs Hospital stating a “Fire Standby” was required. The actual call was a serious Motor Vehicle Collision 8 km west of Field, BC, requiring multiple emergency resources. AHS EMS dispatcher had no knowledge of the details collected by the AHS call taker. Foothills 911 (FRESC) obtained correct information and provided area knowledge to AHS EMS dispatch. It was also necessary for Foothills 911 to relay radio communications between Banff EMS and the AHS dispatch center, as the AHS radio communications were inadequate. These relayed transmissions included the request for STARS air ambulance.



FOOTHILLS REGIONAL EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION (FRESC)

- A Municipal Commission • Established in 1998 • Mandate: 911 services (police, fire, EMS) for its member communities • 20 years of rural expertise that has saved numerous lives with coordinated, efficient emergency response • Facility location: Black Diamond



FRESC serves: 130,000 people in 26 Municipalities and 33 Fire Departments-Stations, including: Arrowwood, Banff, Black Diamond, Canmore, Claresholm, Crowsnest Pass, Eden Valley (served by Longview), Fort Macleod, Granum, Lake Louise, M.D. of Willow Creek, M.D. of Ranchland (served by Longview and Nanton), Stavely, Tsuu T'ina, Black Diamond, Carmangay, Champion, Vulcan County, High River, Longview, Okotoks, Turner Valley, M.D. of Foothills (Priddis, Spruce Meadows, Heritage Point, Blackie and Cayley Fire Departments), Lomond, Milo, Nanton, Vulcan.