

Middlesex County Awarded Municipal Innovation Honour for CARE First Paramedic Deployment Model

Ottawa, Ontario, August 19, 2025 – The Peter J. Marshall Innovation Award Jury has presented its highest award to Middlesex County for the CARE First Deployment Initiatives led by Middlesex-London Paramedic Service (MLPS). The award was presented to MLPS CEO Bill Rayburn and MLPS Director of Paramedic Services Adam Bennett at the 2025 AMO Conference in Ottawa.

The CARE (Coordinated Advanced Response & Efficiency) First model is changing how paramedics respond to 9-1-1 calls. Instead of sending a full ambulance to every emergency, the program uses a smarter, tiered approach, sending the right kind of help based on the urgency of the call.

Two specialized response units are at the heart of the model:

- A Rapid Response Unit, a non-transport vehicle staffed by an Advanced Care Paramedic, handles life-threatening emergencies.
- A First Response Unit supports lower-acuity calls (not immediately life-threatening) and connects patients to other health services, such as Community Paramedicine, rather than automatically transporting them to the hospital.

This approach means ambulances are available when and where they're needed most, and patients get care that's better matched to their needs. Since its launch, the program has improved response times to the most urgent calls by over 9% and is expected to save millions of dollars annually by using resources more efficiently.

"I am incredibly proud of the Middlesex-London Paramedic Service team whose dedication and innovation have earned them the PJ Marshall Municipal Innovation Award for the CARE First Deployment Initiatives," said Warden Brian Ropp. "This recognition reflects the ongoing commitment to excellence that drives MLPS, and the expertise of a highly skilled paramedic team that transforms visionary ideas into meaningful improvements in public service. Their work is delivering smarter, faster, and more efficient emergency care on a daily basis and making a real difference in the lives of our residents."

Middlesex County's model is the first of its kind in Ontario and is designed to be easily adopted by other communities using existing paramedic teams and minimal new

equipment. The County is already working with other municipalities to share the tools and knowledge that made the program possible.

The P.J. Marshall Award is an annual competitive process recognizing Ontario municipalities for creativity and success in implementing new, innovative ways of serving the public. It is sponsored by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, the Municipal Finance Officers' Association, and the Ontario Municipal Administrators' Association.

In addition to Middlesex County, two other municipalities — the City of Kitchener and the Town of Collingwood — received plaque awards.

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