
REPORT TITLE: **Critical Contract Increases and Extensions for Temporary Contracted Nurse Staffing Services and Medical Supplies**

FROM: Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the Contract (Document 2022-051N) awarded to Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. for the provision of temporary contracted nursing staff services for the Region of Peel's five Long Term Care homes, be increased for an estimated cost of \$300,000 (excluding applicable taxes) in accordance with Procurement By-law 30-2018, as amended; and**
- 2. That, the Contracts (2015-624T and 2021-381N) awarded to Medline Canada, Corporation for the supply and delivery of medical supplies for the Region of Peel's Long-Term Care and Public Health, be renewed for an additional five months expiring December 31, 2022, at a cost of \$600,000 in accordance with Procurement By-law 30-2018, as amended; and**
- 3. That the Commissioner of Health Services be authorized to execute the contract extension for the supply and delivery of medical supplies, on business terms acceptable to the Commissioner of Health Services and on legal terms satisfactory to the Regional Solicitor.**

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The ongoing COVID-19 response, community transmission, staff burnout, and vaccination mandates has resulted in staffing challenges.
 - The current contract for Contracted Nursing Staff Services for Long Term Care Homes with Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. requires an extension and monetary increase to maintain an appropriate level of care for residents and to allow sufficient time for evaluation and selection of future vendors.
 - The current contract for the supply and delivery of Medical Supplies for Long-Term Care and Public Health also requires an extension and monetary increase to allow sufficient time to refine Scope of Work requirements and commence the appropriate competitive procurement processes.
 - The proposed temporary contracted nursing staffing services contract increase will be managed through the existing operating budget and/or through the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserves if required. The medical supplies contract extension is covered by the provision for medical supplies in the approved 2022 budget.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The contract with Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. was established in December 2021 as a contingency measure for the provision of temporary contracted nursing staff services once all other options have been exhausted, with the cumulative value not to exceed \$100,000. This was in addition to ongoing efforts on recruitment, retention, and wellness strategies to sustain the LTC workforce. Multiple agencies were contacted to provide a price based on binding terms and conditions. Staff believed that this amount would cover temporary staffing needs for the long term care division for approximately 10 to 12 months, providing sufficient time to issue a competitive procurement process for a long-term solution.

However, due to an increase in COVID-19 illnesses and outbreaks, as well as; challenges associated with adhering to staff vaccination policies as mandated by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) and the Region of Peel, Long Term Care experienced unprecedented staff shortages for Personal Support Workers, Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurse. Contracted nursing staff services were also charged to LTC at a premium which resulted in increasing the contract in January and February 2022 by \$100,000 and \$300,000 respectively using the Emergency Authority, section 5.2.4, of the Procurement By-Law.

Despite the Region of Peel transitioning from a state of emergency to recovery, long term care continues to experience outbreaks related to positive cases of COVID-19 and staffing challenges. While work on a Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently underway, another increase to this contract is required for long term care to ensure it maintains adequate staffing levels to comply with MLTC requirements, and more importantly, for the safety and wellbeing of long term care residents. Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. has demonstrated to be a reliable and proficient vendor, is familiar with the Region's long term care home protocols, and has performed optimally during unprecedented times, staff are requesting that the contract with Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. be increased by a further \$300,000 to ensure business continuity for the next four to six months until awarding a vendor from the request for proposal. If further increases are required, long term care will seek additional procurement authority from Council.

The contract with Medline Canada, Corporation for the supply and delivery of medical supplies for Long Term Care and Public Health was set to expire in 2021 but was extended and increased in accordance with Procurement By-Law 30-2018. Due to the timing and sheer volume of medical supplies required to mitigate exposure to COVID-19, the Contract was increased by \$840,000 using the Emergency authority, section 5.2.4, of the Procurement By-Law.

Staff are currently revising scope of work requirements and are considering whether issuing one or multiple competitive procurements would yield best value to the Region. Funds are available on the current Purchase Order for long term care but will be insufficient to meet the forecasted requirements of long term care and public health. Therefore, staff are requesting that the contract with Medline Canada Corporation be increased by a further \$600,000 to ensure that long term care and public health have access to medical supplies for business continuity and safety and well-being of staff, visitors and long term care residents alike. This amount will provide sufficient time until new contracts are awarded.

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PROCUREMENT PROCESS

In accordance with Procurement By-law 30-2018, as amended, increases and extensions to the contracts require Regional Council approval. The process to increase these contracts is compliant with the By-law.

Services provided by Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc. and Medline Canada, Corporation has been acceptable and provides good value to the Region of Peel.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

Without the requested contract increases and extension, long term care faces the risk of insufficient staffing levels to meet the needs of the residents living in the five long term care homes, and long term care and public health do not have a binding contract for the supply and delivery of medical supplies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of the increase required for the Contract (Document 2022-051N) awarded to Nexim Healthcare Consultants Inc for temporary contracted nursing staffing services is \$300,000. The additional cost will be funded through the existing operating budget and/or through a draw from the Tax Rate Stabilization reserve if required. Staff will continue to leverage as much existing available COVID-19 funding as possible.

The Contracts (2015-624T and 2021-381N) awarded to Medline Canada extension for next five months at a cost of \$600,000 is expected to be fully covered by the existing annual provision for medical supplies in the 2022 approved annual budget for long-term care and public health.

Annual inflationary increases for contract prices are reviewed annually and will be included in the determination of 2023 Regional Annual Operating Budget.

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Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services