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Aligning Rural Communities to Care: New Non-Urgent Stretcher Transportation Service Launches in Renfrew County

RENFREW, ON – November 13, 2026 – Renfrew Victoria Hospital (RVH), St. Francis Memorial Hospital (SFMH), and the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service officially launched the **Aligning Rural Communities to Care Non-Urgent Stretcher Transportation Service** today, marking a significant step forward in improving access to care, patient flow, and emergency response capacity across Renfrew County.

Representatives from the partner organizations, municipal leaders, board members, healthcare staff, and community stakeholders gathered to celebrate the launch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and unveil the service, which will provide dedicated transportation for patients requiring stretcher-based travel for non-urgent medical appointments, diagnostics, transfers, and care needs.

The new service addresses a longstanding challenge in rural healthcare: ensuring patients can access needed care while allowing paramedic resources to remain available for emergencies.

“This partnership is about finding practical solutions for the people we serve,” said **Suzanne Madore, President and CEO of Renfrew Victoria Hospital and St. Francis Memorial Hospital.** “Transportation has consistently been identified as a barrier to timely access to care in rural communities. By providing dedicated non-urgent stretcher transportation, we can improve patient flow, help patients get where they need to be when they need to be there, and create a better experience for patients, hospitals, paramedics, and the healthcare system as a whole.”

The service will reduce the need for paramedic crews to transport non-urgent patients between facilities and appointments, helping to keep ambulances and paramedics available to respond to emergency calls throughout the region.

“This initiative will return more than 5,000 hours of emergency response capacity to our communities each year,” said **Mike Nolan, Chief of the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service.** “It means ambulances and paramedics can spend more time responding to

RENFREW VICTORIA HOSPITAL

SFMH St. Francis Memorial Hospital

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emergencies and less time tied up with non-urgent transfers. At the same time, patients will have more reliable and timely access to important healthcare services. This is a meaningful investment in both healthcare access and emergency preparedness across Renfrew County."

The service is expected to benefit patients throughout the region, particularly those living in rural and remote communities who often face transportation barriers when accessing healthcare services.

Hospital and paramedic leaders emphasized that the initiative reflects the strength of local partnerships and a shared commitment to improving healthcare delivery across Renfrew County.

"No single organization can solve healthcare challenges on its own," added Madore. "Today's launch demonstrates what is possible when healthcare partners come together with a common goal. This is just one example of how collaboration can strengthen healthcare services for the communities we serve."

The Aligning Rural Communities to Care Non-Urgent Stretcher Transportation Service will enhance access to care, improve system efficiency, support patients and families, and help ensure emergency medical resources remain available when and where they are needed most.



Representatives from **Renfrew Victoria Hospital, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, and the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service** joined municipal leaders, board members, staff, and community partners on November 13, 2026, to celebrate the launch of the **Aligning Rural Communities to Care Non-Urgent Stretcher Transportation Service**, a collaborative initiative designed to improve patient access to care while keeping emergency paramedic resources available across Renfrew County.

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About the Partnership

The Aligning Rural Communities to Care Non-Urgent Stretcher Transportation Service is a collaborative initiative between Renfrew Victoria Hospital, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, and the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service. The program provides dedicated non-urgent stretcher transportation for patients requiring medical transfers and appointments, helping improve access to care, patient flow, and emergency response capacity across Renfrew County.