

Moved by:

Mayor Hyggen

OFFICIAL BUSINESS MOTION

Advocacy Regarding Provincial Funding for Dialysis Patient Transportation

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WHEREAS the Lethbridge Regional Hospital is expanding its dialysis unit and will increase its treatment capacity for dialysis patients by 40 per cent in 2026; and

WHEREAS this increase in treatment capacity is a tremendous benefit to the Lethbridge community and the Government of Alberta's commitment to patient-first care; and

WHEREAS this increased treatment capacity will create additional demand for reliable transportation to and from dialysis appointments; and

WHEREAS the full benefit of this expansion cannot be realized without reliable, affordable, and medically-appropriate patient transit to ensure new dialysis spots are fully utilized; and

WHEREAS the Lethbridge Access-A-Ride (AAR) service is a community paratransit service provided and funded by the City of Lethbridge; and

WHEREAS to uphold accessibility and equity, municipalities that provide public transit service must provide paratransit service at a fare equivalent to fixed-route transit; and

WHEREAS this constraint on paratransit fares results in greater public subsidization of this service than for fixed-route transit service; and

WHEREAS the AAR service is operating at full capacity and cannot absorb the increase in dialysis patient transport demand without adversely affecting paratransit service availability for other users with mobility needs; and

WHEREAS access to renal dialysis treatments is a life-sustaining medical necessity requiring patients to attend treatment multiple times per week without interruption; and

WHEREAS insufficient access to transportation can lead to missed or delayed dialysis appointments, resulting in serious health repercussions, avoidable emergency visits, and preventable hospital admissions – all of which could increase strain on the acute-care system; and

WHEREAS there is currently no dedicated provincial funding for non-emergency patient transport for dialysis patients in southern Alberta; and

WHEREAS establishing such funding would improve patient safety, reduce emergency department utilization, and help prevent hospital admissions linked to missed dialysis treatments; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Lethbridge City Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to the Honourable Matt Jones, Minister of Hospital and Surgical Health Services, requesting provincial funding to help meet this anticipated increase in demand for acute-care medical patient transportation.