



News Release

For Immediate Release

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The OPP has so many Frontline Vacancies, It Cannot Provide the Level of Service it is Supposed To: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) had more than 1,000 vacancies for frontline constables in 2020, more than a quarter of all funded frontline constable positions. Many Ontario municipalities served by the OPP are getting less service than they should, says Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk in her *2021 Annual Report*. Between 2016 and 2020, patrol hours provided to municipalities and on provincial highways dropped by 28% (from 1.36 million to 975,000 hours), despite increases in reported crimes and calls for service in recent years.

The audit found that medical leave taken by officers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) significantly contributes to increasing vacancies at detachments. In 2020, the OPP incurred costs amounting to \$42.7 million in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims, in large part due to PTSD.

“The OPP is losing frontline officers, and officers still on the force are experiencing traumatic stress and related wellness issues,” said Lysyk. “Our audit concluded that the OPP is not consistently delivering provincial and municipal police services efficiently and effectively.”

For the 230 municipalities where the OPP had available data, 111 received fewer than 75% of the hours the OPP identified were needed to provide adequate policing services in accordance with the constable deployment model. Further, 26 of those municipalities received fewer than 50% of the needed hours. Overall, the OPP provided about half the number of patrol hours in 2020 than it did in 2011. The audit found that the OPP has not analyzed the impact this has had on public safety.

The report also notes that the OPP does not have an overarching province-wide model that it uses to periodically identify staffing needs to adjust the deployment of officers to the various detachments. The report found that regions with higher frontline vacancies resolve fewer crimes. As well, the OPP does not accurately track or monitor call response times, an important indicator related to public safety. “The OPP had not performed any analysis to project how much stress-related vacancies will continue to rise over the coming years, or whether these effects can be mitigated,” said Lysyk. The OPP must address its frontline problems or the communities it serves could experience the consequences of reduced public safety, all while experiencing rising costs.”

The audit report contains 15 recommendations for improvement.

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Read the report at www.auditor.on.ca

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