



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee
From: John McGowan
Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue

Date: June 10, 2010

File:

Re: Vial of Life Program – Richmond Fire-Rescue Support

Staff Recommendation

That Council approve the in-kind support of RFR staff time to the Vial of Life Program and that staff report back on the success of the program by June 2011.

That Council support a \$3,000 contribution to the Vial of Life Program and that the amount be funded from the Council Contingency Fund account.

John McGowan
Fire Chief
(604-303-2734)

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Budgets		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Community Social Services Group		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DEPUTY	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

On May 11, 2010, the Community Safety Committee directed staff to “*study and report back on the advisability of contributing \$3,000 to the Vial of Life Program from the Council Contingency Fund.*” This report is in response to the Committee referral.

The Vial of Life Program aligns with a Council Term Goal within the Community Safety focus area to *ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in through an interdisciplinary approach to community safety.*

Facts and Findings

In the Vial of Life Program, citizens over the age of 60 who are living in their own residence would be given a vial by their local pharmacist containing a medical information sheet that outlines their specific medical history. This would include information about the individual’s prescriptions and recent relevant medical history. The vial would be placed in the refrigerator for First Responders to access in the event of a medical emergency. The program was launched on June 9, 2010.

The Vial of Life Program will have a positive impact on citizens over the age of 60 in Richmond. Vital medical information will be at the First Responders’ fingertips during emergency medical aid calls and will facilitate the timely treatment of patients.

The purpose of the Vial of Life Program is:

- The Vial of Life contains life-saving information for emergencies.
- This kit enables First Responders and Emergency Medical Personnel to quickly locate vital information regarding the client’s medical history and medications in a time of crisis.
- Information is updated and stored in the vial in the client’s refrigerator.
- The principal aim of the Vial of Life Program is to help the client. Paramedics and firefighters on the scene of an emergency gain quicker access to medical history and medication information resulting in safer, more timely treatment and transport.

This initiative is being driven by the British Columbia Ambulance Service with support from local community partners such as Shoppers Drug Mart and McCue’s Drugs.

A working group of community partners meets monthly to ensure the project is on track and so that members can bring forward their organizations’ concerns. Some of the community partners are pursuing sponsorships that would make the program self-sustainable.

The working group is made up of representatives from the following organizations:

- Victorian Order of Nurses of Canada
- British Columbia Ambulance Service
- Richmond Fire-Rescue
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Seniors Advisory Council
- Providence Lifeline
- Ambulance Paramedics of BC
- Council of Senior Citizens Organizations
- City of Richmond Seniors Services
- The Physical Activity Line
- The UBC LEARN Laboratory

Analysis

Given the changing demographics of Richmond, this program could have significant impacts. Approximately one-quarter of Richmond's residents are currently over the age of 65, according to the Victorian Order of Nurses. Based on Statistics Canada's projections for senior citizens, some time between 2015 and 2021, Canada's population of senior citizens will outnumber children 15 years of age and under. Also of note is the changing ratio of providers to those needing care: the number of people requiring care will grow in comparison to the number of providers. Hence, tools to speed up service to seniors in medical distress, such as the Vial of Life Program, will be of value.

Richmond Fire-Rescue will also benefit from the program. When crews arrive on a scene where a citizen over the age of 60 is in medical distress, the crews will have immediate access to that person's medical history from the information sheet in the vial. This will assist with a more accurate and quicker assessment of the patient and their condition.

BC Ambulance has indicated that the availability of a patient's information is vital to their treatment. Potential negative drug interaction is one of the problems that some seniors must deal with. This program could decrease the probability of negative drug interactions occurring.

The City of Richmond trial program will be evaluated empirically over the next year to measure its success and will be used to support a business case for the continuation of the program. The number of vials distributed and the vial access at calls will be compiled for statistical accuracy. Evaluation information will be provided to Council after the first year of the program.

The City of Richmond already supports the program in kind with staff time. It is recommended that this support continue and that the working group focus on obtaining sponsorship from the private sector, such as pharmacies. Roles for sponsors include community engagement, fundraising, in-kind support, service delivery, and research and evaluation.

Financial Impact

Richmond Fire-Rescue has already assisted with the development of this program through staff participation in the working group and financial support of approximately \$55 for the production of the brochure.

A one-time contribution in the amount of \$3,000 to the Vial of Life program from the Council Contingency Fund account is being requested.

Conclusion

The Vial of Life Program provides wide-spread benefits to citizens over the age of 60 in Richmond and to First Responders. The program allows First Responders to identify important personal medical information that can be used in the immediate treatment of patients. Furthermore, it enhances the ability of our First Responders (BCAS and RFR) to treat patients more effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that Richmond Fire-Rescue continue to support the program with the in-kind donation of staff time, and that Council support a \$3,000 contribution to the Vial of Life program from the Council Contingency Fund account.



Kirby Graeme
Community Relations Officer
Richmond Fire-Rescue
(604-303-2726)