Beat: News

An Ontario Paramedic Service Taking Part

In Medical Drone Trial

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Brian MacKenzie Teepell/USPA 24 News - Residents in Bolton, Ontario, are taking part in a new pilot project that could see drones delivering critical medical equipment to emergency scenes before paramedics arrive.

Peel Regional Paramedic Services launched the six-month initiative Tuesday, with the drones operating during daylight hours within approximately five kilometres of the Bolton Paramedic Satellite Station.

Depending on the type of emergency, a drone can deliver an automated external defibrillator (AED), naloxone to treat an opioid overdose, or an EpiPen for someone experiencing a severe allergic reaction.
Rather than landing at the scene, the drone will hover roughly three metres above the ground and release the medical package in a suitable open area before returning to its base.

The program does not replace paramedic response. Crews will continue to be dispatched to every 911 emergency. In the meantime, emergency dispatchers or paramedics can provide callers with instructions over the phone on how to retrieve and use the equipment safely.
Peel officials say the technology could be particularly useful in rural and more remote communities, where longer distances, traffic and other factors can increase emergency response times.

Throughout the pilot, officials will collect data to assess whether drone-delivered medical equipment can help improve outcomes and whether the program could eventually be expanded to other communities across Ontario.
According to Peel paramedics, cameras mounted on the drones are used strictly for navigation, safety and confirming that deliveries have been completed. The recorded footage is not made available to the public.

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