

Paramedic Association Questionnaire

The NDP government agrees with paramedics that health care remains a top priority for Manitobans. We have listened to Manitobans and that is why health care has always been our government's top priority and continues to be the top priority of Today's NDP. This is in stark contrast to Hugh McFadyen who says that healthcare is no longer a top priority for his party – a shift he says is a “risk” that is “calculated” to show the Tories represent “the party of the future.”

- 1. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends that government funding for emergency medical services be increased immediately to 1.8% of the provincial health care budget.**

Will an NDP Government commit to increasing government funding for emergency medical services to at least 1.8% of provincial health care expenditures to address the need for system development and sustainability?

Manitoba's entire health care system suffered from inadequate funding and cutbacks during the 1990s, leaving the entire health care system in crisis. Since 1999, the NDP have been working hard to restore critical funding to the health care system and repair the damage done in the 1990s.

The NDP realizes that there is still work to be done and that's why health care continues to be our top priority. A re-elected NDP government is committed to continuing to invest in Manitoba's health care system. Compare this to how Hugh McFadyen thinks about health care as a priority in Manitoba: “the healthcare system has received the lion's share of new spending since 1999. We've reached the point now where we have to look at other needs.”

EMS is a critical component of our health care system and we're committed to continuing to invest in EMS. Since 1999 we have made significant investments in EMS across Manitoba:

- In September 2006 we opened the \$7.8 million Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre in Brandon to better coordinate the dispatch of EMS in the province
- In November 2006 we invested \$7 million to fully fund the cost of land ambulance inter-facility transports; fees that patients had to start paying when the Tories abandoned the subsidy program.

- In the last six years we have invested more than \$15 million to completely upgrade our ambulance fleet including 160 new ambulances. This is the single largest investment in ambulances in the province's history. Throughout the 1990s, the province only directly funded the purchase of two new ambulances.
- In 2004 we invested \$6.5 million to replace an air ambulance jet in the Lifeflight program which provides life-saving transport each year to more than 500 people living in remote communities.

Since 1999 we have invested more than \$5 million to construct or substantially upgrade 17 emergency medical stations in communities around the province including Morden/Winkler, Oak Bluff, Carmen, The Pas, Killarney, Swan River, Minnedosa, Rivers, Ste. Anne, Kinnesota Trails, Gypsumville, Steinbach, Lundar, Ashern, Dauphin, West St. Paul.

2. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends the provincial government acknowledge the need for a health education model and professional credentials for paramedics.

Will an NDP Government ensure that paramedics are recognized as health care providers and endorse the need for advanced education and credentials similar to other allied health professionals?

Our government acknowledges the need for more training for paramedics. A re-elected NDP government will continue to work with partners on developing proposals for expanded Primary Care Paramedic education opportunities in Manitoba, and to establish stronger educational standards for all EMS education programs to ensure paramedics are able to meet current and future clinical needs of their patients in our health care system.

In 2003 to 2005 the Province spent \$500,000 for EMS training. This funding was used to:

- develop a bridge training program to educate and train existing emergency medical technicians to the level of PCP;
- supported training of EMS personnel to become adult educators (18 PCP instructors have received bridging training);
- Developed and implemented a web-based learning system; and

- expanded educational support material and equipment including simulation equipment to enable PCP training/education.

3. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends the provincial government assist with the development of a paramedic education program within a recognized and respected postsecondary health sciences faculty.

Red River College is currently working on development of a Primary Care Paramedic education program within their Health Sciences faculty. Will an NDP Government commit to assisting with development and delivery of paramedic education programs at Red River College?

A re-elected NDP government will work with partners to ensure that training opportunities for paramedics are developed.

4. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends the provincial government move quickly toward the formation of an ambulance service delivery model that improves efficiencies and increases the level of pre-hospital emergency care provided by paramedics across Manitoba.

Will an NDP Government take measures to implement operational and administrative changes to ambulance and paramedic services to improve the level of pre-hospital emergency health care available to Manitobans and eliminate regional disparities?

Our government developed a Provincial EMS Framework Steering Committee to conduct a review of EMS system delivery models and to develop recommendations for moving forward. With health care as our party's number one priority, we are always looking for ways to improve the health care system through innovation, investment and efficiencies.

5. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends the provincial government ensure paramedics are recognized as health professionals, and that steps are taken to grant self-regulation to the profession of paramedicine in Manitoba during the regulatory reform initiative.

Will an NDP Government ensure that paramedics are recognized in legislation as health care professionals and work with the Paramedic Association of Manitoba to establish a self-regulating "College" for paramedics in this province?

We have been working with health professions on developing the Health Professions Regulatory Reform Initiative (HPRRI). As a part of this initiative, we have been having discussions with the Paramedics Association about moving EMS to a self regulating professions status.