



Paramedic Self-Regulation

Professional self-regulation is a privilege and a responsibility granted to twenty (20) health professions in Manitoba. On behalf of the people of Manitoba, the government has entered into agreements through legislation with each of these professions that acknowledges the expertise within each group, and grants them authority to regulate their members in the interest of public safety. Paramedics in Manitoba should be granted the responsibility for self-regulation.

The primary purpose behind regulation is to protect the public from incompetent or unethical practitioners. Self-regulation acknowledges that a profession itself, having evolved over time and developed a specialized body of knowledge, is in the best position to determine standards for education and practise and to ensure that these standards are met. Over the course of the past decade, paramedics in Manitoba have demonstrated accountability and a commitment to “raising the bar” within their profession. Paramedics should be considered qualified for self-regulatory status in Manitoba.

Due to the very nature of the profession, paramedics carry out many of their activities in an environment that is not directly monitored or supervised. Without doubt, unethical or incompetent paramedics run a high risk of causing harm to the public. Since it’s inception in 2001, the Paramedic Association of Manitoba has gone to great lengths to ensure excellence in pre-hospital emergency health care and within our profession. As the professional body for registered emergency medical services practitioners licensed to practice in Manitoba, we have:

- Participated in the development and on-going review of national occupational competency profiles for paramedics;
- Lobbied for increased training levels and higher licensing standards consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions;
- Lobbied for recognized post-secondary education of paramedics;
- Participated in the development and review of medical protocols through the Manitoba Emergency Services Medical Advisory Committee;
- Developed and promoted a continuing education training program consistent with current provincial licensing requirements; and
- Developed a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct to promote high ethical standards for paramedics.

A review of the Criteria to Determine Whether a Health Profession Should be Self-Regulating (Manitoba) clearly reveals that paramedics meet the requirements necessary for self-regulation of health professions. The fact that regulation of paramedics is currently the responsibility of the provincial government (Manitoba Health Emergency Services) places untenable conflict on a department also responsible to provide leadership and guidance to those responsible for the provision of emergency medical services. Any attempt to improve professional entrance requirements for paramedics, increase levels of training, conduct appropriate disciplinary practices or raise expectations for on-going competency evaluation would understandably meet with some resistance from those responsible for service provision. For all of these reasons, it simply makes good sense to have paramedics, as professionals, regulate paramedics.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends that the provincial government take immediate steps to grant self-regulation to the profession of paramedicine in Manitoba. We ask that Members of the Legislature communicate support for this recommendation to the Minister of Health and that you copy your correspondence on this matter to our office.



Emergency Medical Services - System Delivery

As Manitobans we share in the expectation of access to high quality, effective and responsive emergency medical service. In many locations Manitobans have access to state of the art services that approach the highest standards. In other areas, there are significant challenges that affect ambulance service delivery including population, geography and inadequate funding.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems throughout the nation are faced with the inevitable prospect of change. Increasing demands for service, coupled with limited funding, are squeezing services as never before. Public policy questions regarding upgrading or changing an EMS system are frequently clouded by the emotions of providers, patients, and elected officials.

Change is very often contemplated without fully understanding the individual elements that contribute to an effective and efficient system. Larger than a single service or a health authority, the EMS system must be viewed holistically. With this in mind the Paramedic Association of Manitoba would like to pose the following questions to the elected officials of Manitoba.

- Is the current system functioning well?
- Could it be improved?
- Must it be redesigned to better serve our communities?
- Is it being delivered equitably across the province?
- Could paramedics be utilized more efficiently within the health care system?

Currently Manitoba is comprised of eleven (11) Regional Health Authorities; each is very distinct in their approach to the delivery of Emergency Medical Services. Within the boundaries of the RHAs there are 37 different service operators. It is this governing model that has contributed to an inconsistent and inefficient Emergency Medical Services System.

Across Canada provincial governments are adopting more centralized EMS delivery models. Provinces such as Nova Scotia, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick operate various forms of a “province-wide” EMS delivery system. The Paramedic Association of Manitoba feels that these are delivery models that are functioning efficiently, effectively and are fiscally accountable to the citizens they serve.

As a recognized allied health care profession, paramedics have the education and skill set to integrate into a comprehensive health care system. In many Canadian jurisdictions, progressive EMS leaders recognize and promote the concept of moving EMS out of a predominately “public safety” model and into a system that has much stronger linkages to health care. Efficiencies are being sought by utilizing paramedics to assist with the provision of in-hospital patient care services, community health care programs and alternative care in non-traditional EMS initiatives.

The Manitoba Government has undertaken key initiatives to improve the delivery of Emergency Medical Services.

- The purchase and maintenance of land ambulances through the provincial Fleet Vehicle program.
- The development of a province wide dispatch center (Medical Transportation Coordination Center) to coordinate primary response and interfacility transports.
- The consideration of standardized fees for service.

These initiatives are first steps toward a more consistent delivery of service province-wide. But we still fall short of ensuring Manitobans have equitable access to consistent and standardized Emergency Medical Services. We still haven’t moved to ensure better integration of paramedics into the health care system. And we still haven’t taken the steps necessary to ensure we have a sustainable emergency medical services system.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba recommends that the Government of Manitoba move quickly toward the formation of a province-wide service delivery model to improve efficiencies and insure equitable Emergency Medical Services for all Manitobans. We ask that Members of the Legislature communicate support for this recommendation to the Minister of Health and that you copy your correspondence on this matter to our office.