



---

## MEDIA RELEASE

---

**For Immediate Release**

**For More Information Contact:**  
**Eric Glass, Chairman – Cell: (204) 781-2585**  
**Email: [chairman@paramedicsofmanitoba.ca](mailto:chairman@paramedicsofmanitoba.ca)**

### **Manitoba Paramedics Challenge Federal Election Candidates**

**2006/01/18** – Paramedics across Manitoba have sent a message to federal candidates seeking election in this province. “Paramedics should be recognized as medical practitioners and the life-saving emergency care we provide should be considered an essential health service”.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba has echoed the call made 18 months ago by the Paramedic Association of Canada asking the Federal Government to recognize the vital role that paramedics play in the delivery of health care and move to reform the Canada Health Act. The Act is designed to make sure that all Canadians have reasonable access to health services and ensure the delivery of health care is consistent across the country. It establishes criteria related to health services that the provinces must fulfill, and defines them as “*medically required services rendered by medical practitioners.*” Despite this definition, the emergency medical care provided by paramedics is not considered an essential medical service within the Canada Health Act.

Eric Glass, chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba, suggests that current legislation does fall short of its objective to *facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers*. “If you receive treatment in a hospital for chest pain or difficulty breathing, the government considers the service to be medically necessary and insured. But if you call an ambulance and receive the same medical treatment from a paramedic, in most Canadian jurisdictions you have to pay for the care you receive. By definition, one has to assume from this discrepancy that the Government either doesn’t consider emergency treatment provided outside of a hospital setting to be medically required or that they don’t consider paramedics to be medical practitioners”.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba has challenged all Manitoba candidates running in the upcoming federal election to consider the need for reform of the Canada Health Act, and has asked them to answer three questions:

- Do you consider prehospital emergency medical treatment to be an essential health service?
- Do you consider timely and potentially life-saving emergency treatment for someone who might be having a heart attack or suffering a diabetic or respiratory emergency in their home to be a medically required service?
- Should all Canadians have reasonable access to emergency health services without fear of financial hardship?

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba has encouraged its members to consider how candidates respond to their concerns when they go to the polls on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba represents the professional interests of Emergency Medical Services practitioners to ensure the well-being and appropriate medical treatment of patients.

- 30 -