



MEDIA RELEASE

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Health Minister Proclaims May 14 – 20, 2006 Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week

2006/05/12 – In recognition of the vital service provided by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel throughout the Province, Health Minister Tim Sale has proclaimed May 14 – 20, 2006 to be Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week in Manitoba.

This year's international theme, ***EMS: Serving on Health Care's Front Line***, characterizes the expanding role that emergency medical services providers play in today's health care system.

"While EMS was originally conceived primarily as a way to get very sick or injured persons to a hospital, it is now so much more than just ambulance transport", says Eric Glass, Chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba. "EMS is a core health service and an extension of emergency medicine. Paramedics are now expected to provide immediate out-of-hospital emergency medical treatment".

"Our healthcare system begins with the incredible dedication and skills provided by Manitoba's emergency medical services practitioners," said Tim Sale, Minister of Health, "Since 1999 our government has purchased 160 state of the art ambulances to support the work of our EMS practitioners. Our government is proud to declare the week of May 14th to the 20th, 2006, as Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week."

Health authorities are also looking to better integrate paramedics into other sectors of the health care system, including injury prevention activities and the promotion and implementation of community health and wellness programs. "Paramedics provide a safety net for our healthcare system, and more than ever we really are serving on health care's front line", adds Glass.

EMS Awareness Week is an excellent opportunity to recognize the significant contributions made each and every day by pre-hospital care givers in communities right across our province. It also offers a tremendous forum for the public to learn more about early recognition of medical emergencies, as well as the importance of personal health awareness and injury prevention.

Ambulance services across the province will be hosting a number of public awareness and educational events throughout the week. This is an excellent opportunity for Manitobans to better understand the importance of Emergency Medical Services within our health care system, and recognize that timely and appropriate emergency care not only improves survival and recovery rates, but also saves countless lives every year.



A sudden illness or injury can happen anywhere at anytime. Signs of a potential life-threatening emergency can include:

- pain, tightness, heaviness or pressure in the chest
- difficulty breathing
- severe or uncontrolled bleeding
- sudden persistent weakness or numbness
- decreased level of consciousness
- sudden confusion or disorientation
- sudden onset of difficulty speaking or blurred vision.

There are over 1,200 licensed EMS practitioners in Manitoba, from First Responders to Advanced Care Paramedics. Manitoba ambulance services operate 160 land ambulances, and responded to more than 115,000 emergency calls in 2005. In addition there are approximately 3,500 air medical transports in our province annually.

For more information about Emergency Medical Services in your area, contact your Regional Health Authority or local EMS operator.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba is the professional association for registered paramedics licensed to practice in Manitoba, promoting excellence in pre-hospital emergency medical care.

- 30 -