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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Paramedics Outline Recommendations to Improve Emergency Health Care** *Greater commitment to ambulance and paramedic services needed to improve health care.*

#### **For Immediate Release**

**2007/05/11** – The Paramedic Association of Manitoba has outlined a number of key recommendations crucial to ensuring the sustainability of the province’s pre-hospital emergency health care system. The recommendations are contained in a White Paper entitled *Emergency Medical Services – Manitoba’s Quiet Crisis* released by the Association earlier today.

In a statement issued with their White Paper, Paramedic Association of Manitoba Chairman Eric Glass said “As paramedics, the environment we work in is characterized by increasing public needs and a greater reliance on emergency medical services within the health care system. As our population ages and the pressures on our health care system continue to grow, it’s only reasonable to expect this trend to continue for many years to come. Policy makers must place more emphasis on ambulance and paramedic services to not only ensure our pre-hospital care system is in a position to meet these demands, but to improve our emergency health care system in general. The status quo is no longer a viable option.”

The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians considers pre-hospital care delivered by paramedics to be an essential link in the health care system. Nearly 18% of all patients visiting hospital emergency rooms in Manitoba are treated and transported by paramedics. In many Canadian jurisdictions, politicians and health care administrators have opted to invest in paramedic services to help alleviate emergency room backlogs and meet community needs in non-traditional roles. Despite the potential for paramedics to have a positive impact on health reform, Manitoba ranks last among Canadian provinces in per capita spending on emergency medical services.

“Too often the idea of change within our ambulance and paramedic service is hampered by emotion,” Glass adds. “As a result, politicians and administrators are pressured to react to immediate problems rather than plan for the future. It’s our hope that the recommendations we’ve made will encourage policy makers to proactively address these issues in an effort to improve health care for all Manitobans.”

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba makes five recommendations necessary to address current system deficits and enhance patient care:

- Increase operational funding;
- Recognize paramedics as health care professionals;
- Educate paramedics in a post-secondary health sciences faculty;
- Address inadequate and inconsistent pre-hospital care across the province;
- Improve credentialing and enhance public safety through paramedic self-regulation.

*Emergency Medical Services – Manitoba’s Quiet Crisis* is available for viewing online at [www.paramedicsofmanitoba.ca](http://www.paramedicsofmanitoba.ca)

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

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