



## Paramedic Association of Manitoba

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### Ontario Study Supports Paramedic White Paper Recommendations

World's largest pre-hospital study shows advanced training for paramedics improves patient outcomes

#### For Immediate Release

**2007/05/24** – Findings from an Ontario emergency medical services study released yesterday prove that paramedics who are able to provide advanced life support not only save more lives but improve the quality of life for many others that they treat. The Ontario Prehospital Advanced Life Support (OPALS) study has determined that adding certain advanced skill options such as intravenous therapy and improved airway management techniques to basic EMS systems could save up to 2% of lives lost due to breathing difficulties each year in Canada.

“While 2% may not seem like a big number, it’s significant when you think that respiratory distress is one of the most common complaints paramedics respond to every day”, says Eric Glass, Chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba. “But what’s even more interesting is that this study also shows that patients treated by paramedics able to provide advanced medical care are twice as likely to arrive at hospital in improved condition. That has the potential to mean they would fewer medical interventions and most likely shorter hospital stays, which is something we’ve been saying for quite some time now.”

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba released a White Paper earlier this month entitled *Emergency Medical Services – Manitoba’s Quiet Crisis*. In this document they outlined a number of recommendations to improve ambulance and paramedic services in Manitoba. Included in those suggestions:

- improved education and professional credentials for paramedics; and
- ensuring all ambulances carry paramedics capable of providing advanced medical treatment.

The White Paper developed by the Paramedic Association of Manitoba goes on to say that “integrating paramedics more fully into the health care environment provides opportunity for added efficiency in the utilization of existing health resources” and could “ease building pressures on the medical community and our health care system as a whole.”

“The OPALS study proves without doubt that our arguments are sound,” adds Glass. “If a patient arrives at hospital in improved condition as a result of emergency medical care provided by the paramedic, not only does it increase the odds of a better outcome for them, but ultimately saves resources both in the emergency room and intensive care units.”

The Ontario study, which is the largest and best-controlled evaluation of pre-hospital advanced life support for respiratory distress in the world, also indicates that patients receiving early advanced emergency treatment by paramedics are more likely to achieve a higher score in brain function testing following the incident. The report is to be published today in the *New England Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

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

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