



Jodi Possia
Chair
Paramedic Association of Manitoba
2nd Floor –1111 Portage Ave
Winnipeg Manitoba
R3G 0S0
chairman@paramedicsofmanitoba.ca

To our friends and members of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba:

New Democrats, and our NDP government, support paramedics and a continued expansion of the role of paramedics in our health care system. Paramedicine in Manitoba has developed into a workforce of over 1,500 dedicated, highly trained and qualified health professionals, many of whom have advanced training and an expanded scope of practice that is critical to our public health care system today and into the future.

I am happy to respond to your questionnaire about paramedic and emergency medical service issues identified by the Paramedic Association of Manitoba, and I can confirm that the NDP support all four of PAM's recommendations:

1) Community Paramedicine

We are committed to expanding the ability of paramedics to transport patients with minor injuries to alternate destinations, such as the new protocol with Misericordia Urgent Care Centre. Unlike Hugh McFadyen and the PCs, we also recognize that community paramedicine is about more than just transport destinations and paramedic referrals, it's about highly-qualified paramedics working to their full scope of practice in community settings.

We were pleased to support and provide funding to establish a 24/7 paramedic position at Main Street Project in Winnipeg. Since it was established, this community paramedic model is helping approximately 1,000 patients per month who might otherwise have had an ambulance called and been transported to a hospital emergency room for treatment.

We will not only sustain this highly successful model, but will expand community paramedicine into other areas. Our vision for health care includes an increasing role for paramedics outside of ambulances, working in community paramedicine. We believe there are additional areas where community paramedics can play an important role, including as part of our primary care plan to ensure all Manitobans have a family doctor by 2015.

2) Standardization

While we have taken steps as government to improve the standardization of EMS delivery in Manitoba, we agree that Manitoba needs a more standardized, consistent and unified

provincial EMS system, across health regions. This will help to ensure paramedics working in different regions have access to the same equipment and supplies, standards and support regardless of which part of the province they work in and that patients have access to the same level of paramedic care and EMS response.

3) Self-Regulation

Recently, we introduced and proclaimed the Regulated Health Professions Act, which clearly lays out a process for health professions to apply for self-regulation to the new Health Professions Advisory Council, a process we were happy that all parties of the legislature supported. We understand that PAM has been developing its submission for self-regulation. We look forward to seeing this application submitted as soon as possible for consideration by the Health Professions Advisory Council.

4) Education

As the role of paramedics in our health care system has evolved and expanded, so too has paramedic training. Manitoba now has a Primary Care Paramedic training program, which our government funded and established at Red River College in 2008. This includes rotating rural classes to help ensure paramedics outside of Winnipeg can more easily access this education program.

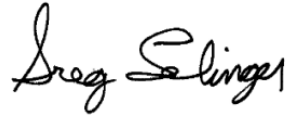
The next step we will pursue is establishing a formal Advanced Care Paramedic training program at a post secondary institution. We believe this program should also include rural classes so rural paramedics have an opportunity to receive this training closer to home, as well as ensure that Advanced Care Paramedic training is designed to support current practicing paramedics employed by cities, municipalities, RHAs and their departments who want to upgrade their training while continuing to work.

The last decade has seen the paramedic profession and EMS system mature from what used to be a largely volunteer and casually staffed workforce with a patchwork of municipally-run ambulance stations, to a highly skilled profession offering life-saving pre-hospital emergency care. There are triple the number of full time paramedics today than in 1999. As your government, we have worked hard to support building this “strong foundation,” as PAM calls it, by investing in new training programs, centralizing dispatch in Brandon, investing in new EMS stations and new ambulances, supporting new protocols to improve patient care such as the life-saving STEMI cardiac protocol, introducing the Defibrillator Public Access Act and, most recently, partnering with STARS to introduce a permanent helicopter ambulance program in Manitoba.

We have appreciated the valuable advice from PAM and the many supportive paramedics who have met with our members over the last several years and we look forward to strengthening those relationships and building a more consistent, standardized, high performance EMS system in Manitoba with all professionals working in emergency medical response practicing at

their full scope of practice, which will ensure families across Manitoba have access to the highest quality paramedic care possible when and where they need it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Selinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".