

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE 2019 BUDGET

PARAMEDIC ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

2018 AUGUST 02

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health care and public safety are important priorities for Canadians. Paramedics are innovators in health care and positive contributors to safe communities. Paramedics are able to respond to the needs of our communities and the crises that occur.

Community paramedics are innovators who provide health care that meets the tenets of the Triple Aim¹. Of note, the health care needs of the indigenous community are unmet. Paramedics, as part of an integrated health care team can contribute to better health care for the indigenous community.

The Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC) recognizes a significant gap in knowledge about the composition of the paramedic health care workforce. Increasingly, Paramedics are integrated into health care (community paramedic, palliative care, primary care). Health workforce planning requires reliable and timely information on the the profession to meet future community needs.

Government recognizes paramedics as a Public Safety Occupation. The contribution of a paramedic line of duty death remains unrecognized by a commemorative monument. The paramedic community is prepared to undertake the responsibility to create a commemorative monument with a grant from Government.

PAC is pleased to make the following recommendations to the committee on behalf of paramedics across Canada:

PARAMEDICS IN HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

- **RECOMMENDATION:** That Government invest in a national Community Paramedic Strategy in conjunction with the provinces.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** That Government employ Paramedics as health care providers in rural and remote indigenous communities.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** That Government instruct the *Canadian Institute of Health Information* to create a Health Workforce Database that stores both record-level and aggregate-level data collected on Paramedics in Canada.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** That Government provide a grant for \$5M to support the planning, development and construction of a Paramedic Commemorative Monument in Ottawa.

ABOUT THE PARAMEDIC ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

The Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC) is a voluntary professional organization of paramedics. Its mission is to advance the profession throughout Canada. We are the voice for paramedicine, which promotes high quality health care to patients. PAC affiliates with educators, regulators, managers, unions and other associations and stakeholders in healthcare and public safety.

PAC represents over 40,000 paramedics in communities across Canada. We are available 7 days/week, 24 hours/day providing primary, advanced and critical care to patients. Paramedics also provide community care and are a vital link between the home and the hospital.

Approximately 95% of Canadians will require the presence and care of a paramedic at some point in their life.

PARAMEDICS IN HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Paramedics believe that all Canadians could benefit from the addition of Community Paramedics to existing health care programs across the country. Paramedics have the knowledge, skills and training to provide non-urgent health care services to patients.

Community paramedicine is an innovative and emerging healthcare profession that allows paramedics to operate in expanded roles to provide routine healthcare services to underserved populations. It fills a gap in our healthcare system, particular in rural areas or those facing strained health care resources.

Provinces like Ontario, Nova Scotia and British Columbia have made investments in community paramedicine to improve access to home care and community support services. These critical investments will support the federal government and its goal of expanded home care and additional support for our aging population.

In addition to the delivery of urgent and emergency care, paramedics provide following care:

- Home visits to seniors and high-needs patients;
- Follow-up care to patients discharged from hospitals;
- Education for patients managing chronic disease;
- Referrals to local services in the community such as Community Care and Health Centres;
- Emergency Department Triage.

Community paramedicine programs have been part of national healthcare landscapes for over two decades in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Government invest in a national *Community Paramedic Strategy* in conjunction with provincial and territorial governments.

Indigenous communities lack appropriate access to health care services. Paramedics can provide care to rural and remote populations in Indigenous communities across Canada. PAC has been work with Indigenous Services and Health Canada to bring paramedic service to indigenous communities. Paramedics are an ideal health care team partner to supplement existing community health care services. Paramedics are easily integrated into the health care and public safety teams. Paramedics are able to *go to the patient* in their environment.

RECOMMENDATION: That Government employ Paramedics as health care providers in rural and remote indigenous communities.

Since the end of the Korean War, Paramedics have incrementally become an indispensable part of the Canadian health care system. The word paramedic only gained recognition in the late 20th century. Two important events have defined paramedics and their importance to health care: one, the dissolution of exclusive scopes of practice within health care professions; and tow, the de-institutionalization of health care.

Paramedics are highly trained professionals with an incredible adaptability to community needs. Paramedics have competencies in various health disciplines. Further, Paramedics are able to bring health care to the home, where the individual (patient) is most receptive to health care services.

Currently, the health workforce data at CIHI is inadequate. The global number of paramedics is a poor estimate. Provinces have woeful accounting of members of the paramedic profession. Of note, in Ontario, the provincial government only records paramedics working for an ambulance service. Paramedics who work for an inter-facility transport company, a special events company, in industry or privately are unaccounted. The health care system needs to know more about paramedics in Canada. Paramedics are a high demand profession: our scope and services are expanding to meet community needs. We need more information on paramedics. CIHI is able to provide the appropriate profession specific information to inform future recruitment, training and education requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: That Government instruct the *Canadian Institute of Health Information* to create a Health Workforce Database that stores both record-level and aggregate-level data collected on Paramedics in Canada.

Since 1980, 63 paramedics have given their life in the line of duty, (<https://www.paramedicmemorial.org/fallen/>). There is no national commemorative memorial to appropriately recognize the individual and family sacrifice. Recently, the paramedic community, including the Paramedic Association of Canada, Paramedic Chiefs of Canada, and the Canadian Paramedic Memorial Foundation have started a dialogue with Heritage Canada. Our community is prepared to engage in the process to ensure a respectful commemorative memorial is provided to those individuals who have given so much to our public safety.

RECOMMENDATION: That Government provide a grant for \$5M to support the planning, development and construction of a Paramedic Commemorative Monument in Ottawa.

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- ¹ Triple Aim: From the Institute for Health Care Improvement, three concepts: improving the patient experience of care (including quality and satisfaction); improving the health of populations; and reducing the per capita cost of health care.