



Paramedic Association of Canada
Association des Paramédics du Canada

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WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE 2021 BUDGET

PARAMEDIC ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

2020 AUGUST 07



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 has drastically changed the healthcare landscape for Canadians. The health and safety for all our citizens has never been more important.

Paramedics are innovators in health care and are positive contributors to safe communities. Paramedics can respond to the needs of our communities and the crises that occur.

Paramedics are innovators who provide health care that meets the tenets of the Triple Aimⁱ. Of note, the health care needs of the Indigenous community continue to be 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 that there is 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) but are not used to their full capacity. Health workforce planning requires reliable and timely information on the profession to meet future community needs.

The government has recognized paramedics as a Public Safety Occupation. The contribution of a paramedic in a line of duty death remains unrecognized by a commemorative memorial. The paramedic community is prepared to undertake the responsibility to create a commemorative memorial with a grant from the federal government.

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

PARAMEDICS IN HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

RECOMMENDATION 1: That government invest in a national *Community Paramedic Strategy* in conjunction with provincial and territorial governments.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That government allocate \$25M to employ Paramedics as health care providers in rural and remote Indigenous communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That government fund and 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 4: That government provide a grant for \$5M to support the planning, development, and construction of a National Paramedic Commemorative Memorial 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. In addition to providing emergency care, Paramedics have the knowledge, skills, and training to provide non-urgent health care services to patients.

Community paramedicine is an innovative and emerging healthcare service that allows paramedics to operate in expanded roles to provide routine and specialized healthcare services to underserved populations. It fills a gap in our healthcare system, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Provinces across the country 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 the following care:

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



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

RECOMMENDATION 1: That government invest in a national *Community Paramedic Strategy* in conjunction with provincial and territorial governments.

The federal government is responsible for Indigenous health. 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 working with Indigenous Services Canada and Health Canada to bring paramedic services to Indigenous communities. Paramedics are an ideal health care team partner to supplement existing community health care services. Paramedics are easily integrated into health care and public safety teams and paramedics can *go to the patient* in their environment. COVID-19 has heightened the need for paramedics in these communities. PAC has been working with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the First Nations Inuit Health Branch to develop a business case for community paramedics to work in Indigenous communities. Recently, a six-month contract for community paramedics was awarded. A federal commitment to long term paramedic service in Indigenous communities is required.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That government allocate \$25M to 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 two, 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 can bring health care to the home, where the individual (patient) is most receptive to health care services and feels the most comfortable.

Currently, the health workforce data on paramedics 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 have expanded to meet the needs of the community. We need more information on paramedics. CIHI can provide the appropriate profession specific information to inform future recruitment, training and education requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That government fund and 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, 50 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. Heritage Canada has reviewed our proposal and reached the conclusion that the project meets the policy criteria to be considered culturally significant and in the national interest to move ahead. 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 4: That government provide a grant for \$5M to support the planning, development, and construction of a National Paramedic Commemorative Memorial 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.