



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 21, 2020

UBCM: Ambulance paramedics urge local leaders to help update paramedicine models

Paramedics have most advanced lifesaving skills & training among frontline responders

Highlights:

- Expand Community Paramedicine program
- Change on-call model that serves 75% of the province
- Ambulance paramedic training takes months and years, not hours

Vancouver, BC – As representatives from local governments across BC get set for the [UBCM's annual convention](#) – to be held online this week due to the pandemic – Ambulance Paramedics of BC is preparing to deliver its message via a virtual booth.

APBC has potential solutions to ease public safety and healthcare burdens, plus recruit and retain paramedics who are in short supply in every community across the province. APBC will ask municipal leaders to support paramedics by calling upon BCEHS and the Ministry of Health to direct sufficient resources towards paramedicine in their communities.

Troy Clifford, president of Ambulance Paramedics of BC ([APBC](#)) said: “Ambulance paramedics have the advanced medical training and skills that can save lives in conjunction with transport to hospital. Ultimately, without these two components, nothing matters. We are your essential frontline emergency responders for all medical emergencies.”

In addition, ambulance dispatchers are also the only 9-1-1 call-takers that have medical training and expertise to begin what can be lifesaving direction over the phone.

Expand Community Paramedicine program

One solution proposed by APBC is to enhance the [Community Paramedicine program](#), and to expand it to [metropolitan areas](#). It currently exists in approximately 100 rural, remote, and indigenous communities. Community paramedics work on the street, in people's homes, and virtually to provide:

- immediate primary medical treatment
- preventative medicine
- healthcare education

- 9-1-1 emergency response

APBC says that by providing direct medical access to vulnerable, high-risk, and aging populations, community paramedics can help reduce calls to 9-1-1 and visits to the emergency room, while the program creates a stable paramedic presence in each community.

“Paramedicine has evolved from being a traditional emergency response to a robust, multi-disciplined practice that encompasses public safety and emergency prevention, scheduled and acute transport, and community-based health innovations,” said Clifford. “As such, the paramedicine model needs to evolve and expand.”

Change on-call model that serves most of BC

Seventy-five per cent of British Columbia relies on an on-call service model, meaning ambulance paramedics are not employed full time, nor receive meaningful compensation – they get paid \$2 per hour during an on-call shift with the hourly wage increasing only if they tend to an emergency or transfer a patient between health facilities. APBC says this makes recruitment and retention of paramedics difficult.

“Although we have significant staffing shortages in urban and metropolitan areas, there is a critical shortage in rural, remote and indigenous communities, and this on-call model that serves most of BC absolutely needs to change if we want to retain staff and recruit new paramedics,” said Clifford. “These paramedics cannot support their families on this model, so they choose to move on to other professions.”

Clifford says municipal leaders need to implore BCEHS and the Ministry of Health to change this model to better serve their communities.

Most advanced lifesaving training

First responders provide interventions to initially help patients in their emergency, while ambulance paramedics provide the most advanced lifesaving medical training, education, and licensing. They also have years of experience.

“Ambulance paramedic training takes months and years – not hours – and involves clinical experience and practicums. We use our advanced medical training to provide critical care that continues through transport to hospital in ambulances equipped with the latest life-saving equipment,” said Clifford.

There are several training and licencing [levels](#) ranging from Emergency Medical Responders, who provide emergency care and transportation in some rural and remote areas, to more advanced emergency paramedic levels:

- Primary Care Paramedic
- Advanced Care Paramedic
- Critical Care Paramedic



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- Paramedic Specialists
- Community Paramedics

In addition to being the only frontline responders not restricted by municipal boundaries, ambulance paramedics have the following resources available by land, sea, and sky, all of which are equipped with lifesaving medical equipment:

- Ambulances
- Paramedic Response Units
- Fixed-wing aircraft
- Helicopters
- Boats

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Media Inquiries (call, text, or email):

Renu Bakshi 604 787 1873 or renu@renubakshi.com

Troy Clifford, President of APBC, at 250 319 4713 or troy.clifford@apbc.ca

About Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC:

Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of British Columbia is the union organization that represents the 4,500+ Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of the province of British Columbia, Canada. Please visit www.apbc.ca and www.911bc.com for more information.

