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*The Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC are honoured to deliver care and services on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the 198 First Nations and 38 chartered Métis communities across British Columbia.*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## March 2023 President Update

On behalf of the Negotiations Committee and the Provincial Executive Board, I am proud to be part of the team that's brought, what we believe, is a monumental collective agreement for this union and profession. The pressure to get to this destination was incredible. It shows the strength, determination, and solidarity I always knew we had. It makes me proud to serve you all, and hopefully, you will give me the honour of continuing with another term as your president this fall.

As we reflect, it's hard not to realize what a major move forward we have taken; however, we have some sobering realities still to tackle. With many of the same significant and tragic issues still present, with similar out-of-service levels, increased psychological injuries, and another tragic patient outcome where no ambulance was available, this time in Nakusp. We must keep the pressure on BCEHS and this Government to ensure every person gets timely and

appropriate care and paramedic services when they need them. Sadly, this is not happening, and in many areas of this province, we see the system fail.

As we move forward with this new collective agreement and set dates for implementing all the various changes, I want to make it clear that we are not done. We must ensure we advocate and keep service delivery and paramedic services paramount and at the forefront of community conversations and solutions. We still have a long way to go in addressing many of our challenges with meaningful solutions, from improving Mental Health and Wellness supports, ensuring service levels, and improving staffing and deployment models. I continue to reach out to the government and community stakeholders to schedule meetings as we continue to press for improvements in service delivery and for the wellness of our members and their families.

I have been meeting with municipal leaders all over the province from remote to metro areas to assist them in advocating for resources in their communities including Community Paramedics, primary response and specialty support teams. I have had limited engagement from the provincial politicians in our key areas which is concerning. However, I am even more committed to continuing to build and advocate for our solutions for community healthcare and public safety. Again, the work is not done!

You are going to continue to see us in media, on the frontlines with you, advocating for patients and their care, paramedic services, and member wellness and supports. Now is the time for our profession and union to take the next step as a profession. We have crossed one bridge but continue this journey forward and are not stopping.

Thank you for your kindness and all that you do every day. I am so proud to be at your side.

In Solidarity,

Troy Clifford  
President



**The BC First Responders' Mental Health Committee Convention** was held on January 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.

This Committee was established in December 2015 to provide a central inventory of mental health resources and best practices that first responder agencies across the province can access. The BCFRMHC is chaired by WorkSafeBC and comprises multiple B.C. first responder agencies, who work collaboratively to provide cross-organizational leadership and recommended practices to promote better mental health in first responders across the province.

**Mission:**

To actively promote positive mental health and provide the leadership and best practices (resources, awareness, education, training, and supports) that first responders, their communities, and leaders need.

## **Connecting leaders to promote positive mental health:**

Paramedics, Firefighters emergency dispatchers, and law enforcement officers experience traumas and stressors on the job that are unlike those seen in most other occupations. It's unsurprising that recent research has shown that these workers are at higher risk of mental health injuries. The agencies that employ first responders are tasked with best supporting their mental health – from determining appropriate training for first responders and their managers, sourcing occupationally aware practitioners, to aiding with recovery and hope through peer support.

This reality led to the formation of the BC First Responders Mental Health Committee – a multi-agency committee representing labour and management from urban and rural communities. The committee is working collaboratively to provide cross-organizational leadership, recommend practices, and develop resources that promote positive mental health for first responders across the province.

One of the highlights for me was keynote speaker Laurie White. While stationed with the RCMP in Kitimat, B.C., in 1998, Laurie was shot in the right leg by a sex offender wielding a sawed-off .303 rifle. Damage was so severe that her leg had to be amputated five inches below her knee. After only ten months of rehabilitation, Laurie passed the PARE (the obstacle course test required for all members). She made an unprecedented return to complete, unrestricted general policing duties with a prosthetic leg. When Laurie retired from the RCMP in 2020, she achieved a 22+ year goal of publishing her memoir (“10-33, An Officer Down Steps Back Up”).

Laurie delivered such an impassioned heartfelt talk that it brought the house down.

There were many activities, but another stand out was everybody's favourite, the...

### **Stress Intervention Dog Programs:**

The BC First Responders' Mental Health Committee is thrilled to welcome VICD Service Dogs, the Stress Intervention Dog Division of BC Guide Dogs, as our charitable partner for this year's conference. Delegates can visit VICD Program members in the Elmbridge Room to learn more about the program.

Current working members of the stress intervention dog program will be on-site throughout the conference, including:

- Ferus, placed with BC Professional Fire Fighters Association Mental Health Task Force
- Benji, placed with BC Professional Fire Fighters Burn Fund
- Ragnar, placed with Surrey Police Service

Fundraising opportunities include a 50/50 draw and several raffles to interact with the dogs and volunteers.

Raffle opportunities include:

- Walk & Talk – win an opportunity to take one of VICD's Stress Intervention Dogs out for a walk & talk with a VICD team member.
  - Two opportunities during each of the following:  
Day 1 & 2 – morning break, lunch, afternoon break
- Puppy Play – win an opportunity to enter the puppy play area and get yourself some puppy-loving!
  - Two opportunities during each of the following:  
Day 1 & 2 – morning break, lunch, afternoon break
- One on One – win an opportunity for a one-hour visit with Mike Annan, Executive Director of VICD.
  - One opportunity

We continue to work on tools and support in our committees and

are grateful for these fantastic members that take a stand for us!

Sincerely,

Warren Leeder  
Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator  
Ambulance Paramedics of BC



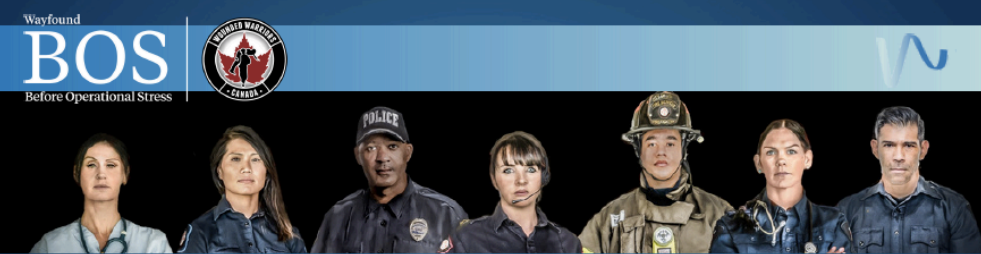








# RESOURCES



Wayfound  
**BOS**  
Before Operational Stress


Through funding provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Before Operational Stress program is now available for Public Safety Personell at no cost. Individual participants are invited to sign up (not mandatory) in BOS program research surveys.\*

**BOS is an evidence informed program that builds mental health resiliency, skills, and knowledge about managing the stress related to traumatic experiences expected as part of many frontline public safety jobs.**

**Individual Registration Code: CUPE873**

Scan the code to register today!

[www.wayfound.ca](http://www.wayfound.ca)



CIPSRT | ICRTSP

\*The research study is being conducted by researchers at the Canadian Institute of Public Research and Treatment (CIPSRT). Participation in this research study is voluntary and is not a requirement for participation in the BOS program.

Please see the above program with special code for APBC members!



Did you know that you don't have to wait until mid-March 2023 to start panicking about CME credits? There are multiple courses available now on the [PHSA Learning Hub!](#)



Paramedic Liability Insurance through our partner at EQUA! Use the code "APBC" when you go to the checkout. We are seeing more and more litigation in our field and cannot recommend insurance more to our members. Please research your options by clicking the link in the picture.

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1-855-969-4321



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**Paramedic Association of Canada**  
**Association des paramédics du Canada**

Did you know that APBC also represents us as the BC Chapter of the Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC)? Click on the picture for more information.

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The Code 3 Newsletter is now completely digital!

To do our part for the environment and be more cognizant of the time and cost of mailing out dozens and dozens of copies throughout the province, we will no longer be sending paper copies out to individual stations.

Please distribute the newsletter throughout your station and region as you see fit!

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# SUBMISSIONS

We are always looking for insights, ideas, and stories.  
If you have anything you'd like to feature, please  
contact me at [newsletter@apbc.ca](mailto:newsletter@apbc.ca)



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