



Paramedics are Key to Connected and Convenient Healthcare

Paramedics need to be fully recognized healthcare professionals

Paramedics are fully mobile healthcare professionals, uniquely suited to help create a more connected and convenient healthcare system for Ontario.

The Ontario Government has made smart and much appreciated investments to support paramedics, including funding for off-load delay nurses and expanded community paramedicine.

Ontario can build on these investments and draw from the collective experience of more than 50 paramedic services to strengthen the entire healthcare system. by fostering innovative approaches to paramedicine.

The Ontario Association of Paramedics Chiefs has identified the following three key priorities.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

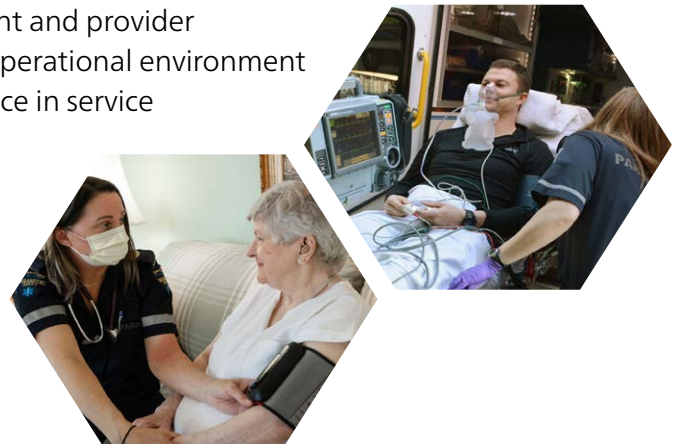
Dispatch Transformation



Ontario's ambulance dispatch system requires transformational change to ensure Ontarians in need of care get the right care and the right resources at the right time. The public expects that a 9-1-1 call for medical assistance brings high quality paramedic care and efficiency. Implementing improved technology and integrated clinical hubs into the ambulance dispatch is urgently required to effectively support these needs.

In municipalities that are able, and have the desire, the Province needs to engage in negotiations to enable a closer alignment of the operation of Central Ambulance Communications Centres with their land ambulance operations. Municipal operation of ambulance dispatch with land ambulance operations has been demonstrated to improve paramedic services delivery while ensuring reliable, seamless interoperability, and operational alignment with community needs.

Together, we can improve the patient and provider experience by providing the tools, operational environment and a culture that supports excellence in service to the community.



Improving Patient Flow



Systemic patient flow issues, including pressures on hospital emergency departments, can be further improved by investing in expanding Community Paramedicine programs and scopes of practice.

These programs have demonstrated value in addressing urgent and chronic health priorities and reducing the need for 911 response. Community Paramedicine has been agile and successful in supporting Ontario's pandemic response, as well as providing ongoing support of vulnerable patients living with complex social issues, mental health challenges, chronic disease and those waiting for admission to long-term care.

It is essential that we provide patients who have requested paramedic support through 911 with treatment choices, including safely expanding models of care, facilitating clinical consultation in dispatch and at home with both front line and community paramedics, facilitating virtual care consultations, and improving paramedic access to existing community-based treatment options.

While recent investments to provide more off-load delay staff were a critical step in supporting patients waiting for transfer of care, more is needed. Hospitals need concrete direction regarding expectations and consequences when these are not met. Hospital flow issues resulting in paramedic transfer of care delays are a health risk affecting all Ontarians. We need to protect our 911 paramedic resources and emergency departments for patients who need high acuity care.

Together, we can improve patient outcomes and reduce system pressures by improving patient choice to receive the right care in the right place.

Addressing Paramedic Health Human Resource Challenges



Paramedicine needs a contemporary regulatory framework that protects the public interest and meets the evolving needs of the profession and service providers to benefit the communities we serve.

The OAPC is asking that the Minister of Health take steps to ensure the inclusion of paramedics in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (1991). This important decision will ensure that the regulations related to paramedic practice are open, transparent, accessible and fair for those seeking to become regulated health professionals, for the regulated health professionals who are governed by the health regulatory colleges, and in particular, for patients and members of the public for whom the legislative framework is meant to protect.

As a result of paramedics not being regulated within the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, paramedics are also not studied within HealthForce Ontario's health human resource scope. Like other health providers in Ontario, paramedics are experiencing high turnover, burnout and expedited retirement concurrent with expanding roles and demands for paramedic services.

Paramedic Chiefs are seeking support from the Province to expand credential portability, expedite international licensure of paramedics and expand the Learn and Stay Grant to include academic institutions servicing graduates to rural municipalities across all of Ontario to support recruitment initiatives. This step would be consistent with the program already in place for nursing. Chiefs also support academic institutions that are seeking provincial support to create degree-based education for paramedics provided there is no reduction in annual graduation rates of paramedics through implementation.

Together, we can protect the public, improve patient outcomes and reduce system pressures through targeted investments and partnership.

Paramedic services are on the ground, mobile, agile and innovative. We are ready.
