
INCLUSION OF PARAMEDICS UNDER THE REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ACT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A SELF-REGULATING COLLEGE

Purpose

To recommend that the Government of Ontario include paramedics under the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* and establish a self-regulating college. This will enhance public safety, professional accountability, workforce mobility, and the capacity of paramedics to provide advanced, community-based care that relieves pressure on the broader health system.

Background

Paramedics are highly trained health professionals who deliver critical, pre-hospital, and community-based care. Their scope of practice has evolved significantly extending into *community paramedicine*, chronic disease management, preventative care, and home-based health monitoring.

Despite this evolution, Ontario's paramedics remain outside the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)*. Oversight is currently provided through base hospitals and local service structures, resulting in regional inconsistencies, limited portability, and uneven accountability.

In contrast, other health professions in Ontario such as nursing, midwifery, and respiratory therapy are self-regulated under the RHPA, with colleges that uphold public safety and professional standards. Other provinces (e.g., Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia) have already established paramedic colleges, thus modernizing governance and reducing bureaucratic oversight within their Ministries of Health.

Key Issues

- **Absence of Self-Regulation:** Paramedics remain outside the RHPA, limiting consistency in professional standards and accountability.
- **Fragmented Oversight:** Base hospital delegation leads to regional variation, inefficiencies, and inconsistent patient care.
- **Workforce Mobility Constraints:** Current licensing models restrict paramedics from easily transferring credentials or working across jurisdictions.
- **Community Paramedicine Expansion:** As paramedics increasingly deliver proactive, home-based care, the lack of a regulatory college limits the safe and consistent growth of these programs.
- **Equity Among Health Professions:** Paramedics are among the few frontline professionals without a college which creates disparities in recognition, autonomy, and public trust.

International Evidence

Across the world, paramedicine has been evolving into a fully regulated and autonomous health profession, with countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and South Africa, as well as several Canadian provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick), having established formal regulatory bodies or colleges. These self-regulating frameworks protect the title of “paramedic,” enforce national education and practice standards, and oversee professional conduct to ensure public safety and accountability. In the UK and Australia, paramedics are practising at advanced levels including independent prescribing, community-based care, and extended clinical roles which reduces hospital admissions and eases pressure on emergency departments. Internationally, self-regulation enhances workforce mobility, strengthens patient trust, and fosters integration with primary and community health systems. By adopting a similar model under Ontario’s *Regulated Health Professions Act*, the province would align with these global best practices, empowering paramedics to deliver higher-quality, more efficient, and equitable care across the health continuum.

Recommendation

That the Government of Ontario:

- Include Paramedics under the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) to recognize them as autonomous, self-regulated professionals.
- Establish a College of Paramedics of Ontario to oversee licensing, standards of practice, professional conduct, and continuing competency.
- Establish a regional knowledge-sharing network to help other municipalities replicate the Mesa model across Ontario.

Benefits of Paramedic Regulatory College

A College would:

- **Enhance Public Trust and Safety** through consistent professional oversight.
- **Elevate Standards and Accountability** across all regions of Ontario.
- **Support Workforce Mobility** by allowing credentials to be portable across municipalities and services.
- **Enable Expansion of Community Paramedicine** by providing a regulatory foundation for advanced, integrated models of care.
- **Reduce Administrative Burden** on base hospitals and central agencies.
- **Promote System Resilience** by aligning Ontario’s paramedics with international best practices.

Conclusion

Establishing a self-regulating College of Paramedics under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* is a vital modernization step. It would empower Ontario’s paramedics to practice at the same advanced, accountable level as their international counterparts, improve patient outcomes, enhance mobility, and strengthen system capacity. Ontario should follow this proven path to build a more integrated, sustainable, and trusted health care system.