



MEDIA RELEASE

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Paramedics Encouraged by Cerilli's Agreement to Review Fire/Paramedic Amalgamation

2006/10/23 – Winnipeg Mayoral candidate Marianne Cerilli has agreed to “reopen the fire/paramedic merger plan and reconsider the best approach to providing EMS (emergency medical services) for Winnipeg” if elected to the City’s top job October 25th.

In response to correspondence sent last week by the Paramedic Association of Manitoba (P.A.M.) to all four mayoral candidates, Cerilli acknowledged the Association’s concerns regarding Winnipeg’s emergency medical services system. P.A.M. has argued that paramedics are health professionals and should be more closely aligned with the health care system, a role that will be jeopardized by the amalgamation model chosen by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service.

“We’ve been trying to emphasize the potential system benefits of utilizing paramedics in some non-traditional roles that require these professionals to be more fully integrated into our health care system”, says Eric Glass, Chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba. “Paramedics in other Canadian jurisdictions are used to help alleviate the backlog of ambulances sitting at hospital emergency departments, as well as assisting in areas of primary and community health”.

Ms. Cerilli has told the Paramedic Association of Manitoba that she agrees paramedic services should be linked to the health care system. In her response to the Association’s letter she suggests the Winnipeg amalgamation has not been handled well and could potentially be putting the public at risk. “She’s asking us some very intelligent questions regarding centralized planning for EMS, how to utilize first responders and paramedics and how best to take advantage of existing resources”, adds Glass. “It’s encouraging to see that Ms. Cerilli has taken the time to listen to our position and seems to recognize there is tremendous potential in these areas”.

Incumbent Mayor Sam Katz appeared to defend the City’s decision to forge ahead with the fire/paramedic amalgamation process in his reply to the Paramedic Association of Manitoba. Candidates Hasselriis and Pollock have yet to respond to the Association.

The Paramedic Association of Manitoba is the professional association for paramedics licensed to practice in Manitoba, promoting excellence in pre-hospital emergency medical care.

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