



Paramedic Association of Manitoba

MEDIA RELEASE

Health Minister Proclaims May 17 – 23, 2009 Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week

For Immediate Release

2009/05/15 – In recognition of the vital service provided by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel throughout the Province, Health Minister Theresa Oswald has proclaimed May 17 – 23, 2009 to be **Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week** in Manitoba.

This year's theme for EMS Week, "**EMS – A Proud Partner in Your Community**", symbolizes the significance of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel working as partners in our health care system and the communities they serve. Their dedication to this partnership ensures round-the-clock emergency response and medical care to communities throughout the province.

Although primarily associated with ambulances, emergency medical services is really a system of dedicated professionals who provide timely and appropriate pre-hospital care to sick and injured people. Beginning with the initial emergency call for help, our EMS system includes Emergency Medical Dispatchers, community based First Responders, as well as Primary and Advanced Care Paramedics in both ground and air transport ambulances. Emergency Medical Services Awareness Week is a week of celebration dedicated to the achievements of the many men and women who are on the front lines within the EMS community.

"Emergency Medical Services are vital to our health care system, and often the first point of contact within the system for many Manitobans", says Eric Glass, Chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba. "EMS Awareness Week offers a tremendous forum for the public to understand the importance of Emergency Medical Services, and recognize that timely and appropriate emergency care not only improves survival and recovery rates, but saves countless lives every year."



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A sudden illness or injury can happen anywhere at anytime. Signs of a potential life-threatening emergency can include:

- pain, tightness, heaviness or pressure in the chest
- difficulty breathing
- severe or uncontrolled bleeding
- sudden persistent weakness or numbness
- decreased level of consciousness
- sudden confusion or disorientation
- sudden onset of difficulty speaking or blurred vision.

There are over 1,400 licensed EMS providers in Manitoba, from Emergency Medical Dispatchers and First Responders to Advanced Care Paramedics. Manitoba ambulance services operate 160 land ambulances, and responded to approximately 145,000 emergency calls last year. In addition there are more than 5,000 air medical transports in our province annually.

Ambulance services across the province will be hosting public relations and educational events throughout EMS Awareness Week. This is an excellent opportunity for Manitobans to better understand the importance of Emergency Medical Services within our health care system, and recognize that timely and appropriate emergency care not only improves survival and recovery rates, but also saves countless lives every year.

For more information about Emergency Medical Services in your area, you can contact your Regional Health Authority or local EMS operator.

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

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