

The Pulse

by SCoP

Saskatchewan College of Paramedics newsletter

July 2020



Gilbert Maraboto
Wakaw EMS

IN THIS ISSUE:

| | | | |
|--|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Supporting Regulated Health Care Professionals During COVID-19 | Page 2 | SCoP Awards Deadline Extended | Page 8 |
| 2020 AGM shifts to online meeting | Page 3 | Pandemic Emergency Licence | Page 8 |
| Virtual Reality and Immersive Video | Page 4 | 2021 Licence Renewal | Page 8 |
| Building SCoP Research Capacity | Page 5 | Professional Conduct Committee update | Page 8 |
| Protocol Manual Spring Update | Page 7 | Paramedic Survey | Page 9 |

Supporting Regulated Health Care Professionals During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is difficult and challenging for our health care system. During a surge in COVID-19 cases, you may be required to adapt your usual practice. You may be asked to work in unfamiliar settings or outside of your typical role for the benefit of patients. You are not expected to practice beyond the professional scope of practice of your profession nor beyond your individual competence. As the province plans its response, your role is vital to patients receiving safe, competent, and ethical care.

Principles and expectations for practice

1. Health care professionals remain accountable to the standards and competencies required by their regulatory and licensing bodies and professional associations.
2. A healthcare professional cannot work beyond their legislated scope of practice.
3. Health care professionals may be required to learn new competencies to fulfill their roles.
4. Health care professionals have the responsibility to self-assess their competencies and determine which activities are within their current or possible competencies (i.e. achievable with review or training)

and determine which are outside of a reasonably attainable competency (i.e. insufficient time for competent skill development).

5. Competence does not always equal comfort. It is recognized that as pandemic phases progress the demands on providers may increase and the perception of ability to meet professional requirements will be challenged.
6. Health care professionals are trained to work in many different environments and conditions and have the judgment and professional acumen to make reasonable and prudent decisions related to practice within those environments.
7. There may be different providers working in teams, each of whom is accountable for their own practice. Within the team, collaboration and communication are fundamental to effective team functioning.

As regulated health care professionals, you are expected to always meet (or exceed) practice standards. Practice standards are written broadly. This allows flexibility and provides you with the ability to meet them consistently even if how you meet those standards changes during a pandemic. You are expected to make decisions based on assessment of the patient and situation by using your best judgment to ensure you continue to provide safe, competent, and ethical

care as any reasonable prudent health professional would.

Expectations when working in an unfamiliar / uncertain situation

- Use knowledge to determine actions required to maintain the safety of the patient, others, and yourself
- Be aware of and access supports and resources
- Continue to meet practice standards
- Document care delivery
- Communicate questions and concerns to others and those in leadership roles

If you need more information or wish to talk with someone about a practice situation, please contact your employer, Clinical Standards within the Saskatchewan Health Authority, or your respective regulatory body.

Thank you for your dedication, professionalism, and service as we, as a province, respond proactively to the evolving needs.

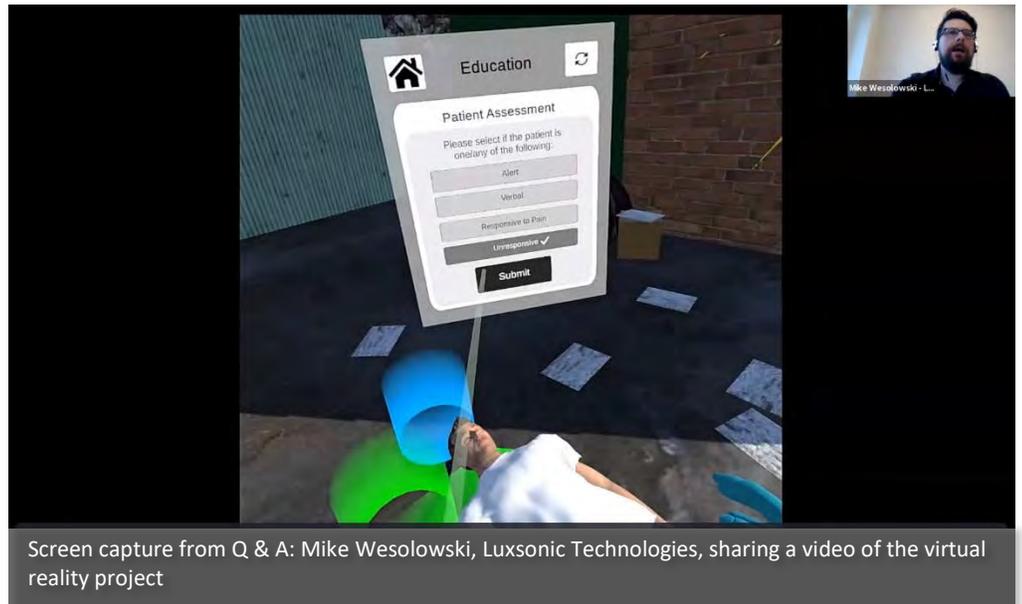


2020 AGM shifts to online meeting

The 2020 SCoP AGM, initially scheduled to be held in Saskatoon, was hosted online as a Q & A session on May 4, 2020.

SCoP Council, staff, and representatives of the provincial government attended the session by video to answer questions posed in the chat by members and other stakeholders. Over 80 people attended the online event and seventeen questions were asked in the chat.

The session began with a presentation from Mike Wesolowski, CEO of Luxsonic Technologies Inc, showing a video of the progress being made with the virtual reality project.



Screen capture from Q & A: Mike Wesolowski, Luxsonic Technologies, sharing a video of the virtual reality project

Jacque Messer-Lepage, Executive Director, presented an update on College activities. This presentation is available as a pdf on the SCoP website along with the full video of the entire Q & A session (run time: 80 minutes).

WATCH VIDEO:

www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/resources/agm/

Warren Kaeding, Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health, brought greetings from the government and answered

questions to begin the Q&A. Minister Kaeding spoke very positively about the work being done by community paramedics and he praised contributions the profession makes to communities. He also acknowledged the immense challenges that our members face on the job today and encouraged everyone to speak up about their experiences and seek help.

Dave Morhart, Director of EMS at the Ministry of Health, answered questions about staffing and also directed anyone with specific

concerns to reach out to the Ministry or to the health authority.

Jen Williams, Director of Professional Practice and Research, answered questions about scope of practice and pain medications, and also talked about how changes to these can affect the ability of members to license in other jurisdictions, and for those who want to move here. Pain management has been flagged, especially in a province where transports can be very long, and noted recent changes in medications to address this. The College is also working on other pandemic-related proposals (ACPs monitoring ventilators), which means working with other regulators such as the Saskatchewan College of Respiratory Therapists.



Screen capture from Q & A: Jacquie Messer-Lepage, Executive Director of SCoP, presenting College update

Election results

Election results were announced, and the following members were elected to positions on Council or Committee:

- Matt McGurk, Vice President
- Chris Fay, Member-at-large
- Mike Meyer, Member-at-large
- Marie Stimson, Nominations Committee

2020 – 2021 SCoP Council

President: Kyle Sereda

Vice President: Matt McGurk

Past President: Bill Fischer

Members-at-Large:

Jason Farago (Fire Representative)

Tim Hillier, Chris Fay, Mike Meyer

Public Representatives:

Olumide Adetunji, LL.B, LL.M,

Karen Gibbons, Joel Gritzfeld

Thank you to outgoing Member-at-Large Dan Lewis for his service on Council!



The virtual reality software application consists of a single module to educate, train and assess National Occupational Competency Profile (NOCP) General Competencies 5.1 a-e: maintain patency of upper airway and trachea.

The sub-competencies include:

- Use manual maneuvers and positioning to maintain airway patency
- Suction oropharynx
- Suction beyond oropharynx
- Utilize oropharyngeal airway
- Utilize nasopharyngeal airway

The virtual reality module contains a high-fidelity environment with representative 3D objects and modules in an interactive setting.

In efforts to replicate a realistic practice setting, the module is based in a clinical environment with an ambulance and a human anatomical model configuration using 3D virtual reality.



Virtual Reality and Immersive Video

Luxsonic Technologies is a Saskatoon-based company that builds immersive and collaborative virtual reality software for medical education, training, and healthcare delivery.

They have been working with SCoP since January to build a hands-on virtual reality (VR) assessment and training module for paramedics.

Virtual Airways Readiness Assessment (VARA) Project

Thanks to funding from the Government of Saskatchewan's Immigrant Bridge to Licensing Program, SCoP is developing a virtual reality software application with Luxsonic Technologies.

This will be used for paramedic training and education purposes, as well as assessing performance of Canadian paramedics and International applicants seeking paramedic licensure in Saskatchewan.

In June of 2020, the College demonstrated the virtual reality application to a small group of Regina EMS Paramedics. Participants were pleasantly surprised with the quality of the module and the use of cutting-edge technology.

360° Immersive Video

Immersive video allows the viewer to feel like they are in a live-action scenario. Luxsonic has filmed videos relating to donning and doffing of PPE, and n/o swabbing. Find links to them from the SCoP website at:

www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/co-vid-19-best-practice-messages/

The College looks forward to the future and the opportunity to educate, train and assess using innovative technology!

Building SCoP Research Capacity

Why do research? Research is concerned with increasing our understanding. It provides us with the information and knowledge needed for problem solving and making decisions.

“SCoP has taken on a couple of research initiatives to make a meaningful difference to the patient and community,” says Rashed Al-Mamun, Policy and Research Analyst with the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics. “Our college is also strategically committed to developing and maintaining evidence-based professional standards in paramedicine. “

Since 2015, the College has been building research capacity for the College, building relationships, creating partnerships, and accessing new avenues for funding. Rashed has been with SCoP since 2016.

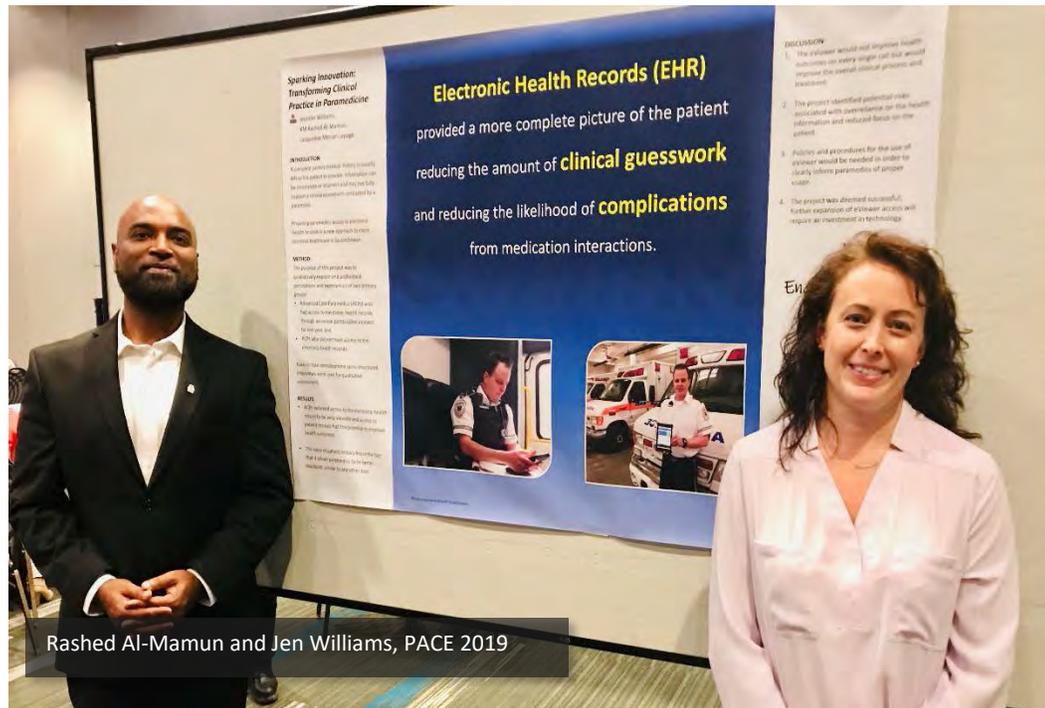
Electronic Health Records Project

Recently SCoP successfully completed a pilot project to test the effectiveness of care using electronic patient history as a support.

Paramedics were given iPads and access to view a patient’s health information. It’s a tool that other healthcare professionals in the province are able to access, but not paramedics.

“The study found that the eViewer would not improve health outcomes on every single call but would improve the overall clinical process and outcome,” says Rashed. “The record really helped the paramedics make their decisions. They got to know ahead of time the condition of the patient, chronic diseases, and so on.”

Investments in technology are required to implement the findings and initial meetings have taken



Rashed Al-Mamun and Jen Williams, PACE 2019

place among stakeholders. The College is not involved in the rollout but is excited to see this research contribute directly to patient care.

Rashed, along with Jen Williams,

Director of Professional Practice and Research at SCoP, presented the findings of the study at the Paramedic Research Symposium in conjunction with the Paramedicine Across Canada Expo (PACE) last



Public Engagement Project focus group

year in Winnipeg, Manitoba. A summary will also be posted soon on the SCoP website.

Public Engagement Project

Attendees of the 2018 SCoP AGM will remember Rashed leading a discussion session about patient engagement. 100% of the participants agreed it was important to engage the patient/public in discussions about paramedic care.

The Public Perception of Paramedic Care in Saskatchewan research project is co-funded by Mitacs, a non-profit organization that matches funding and brings together employers, post-secondary students, and academic institutions into partnerships for research. For this project SCoP is partnered with the University of Regina and Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and the research team is working under the supervision of Dr. Florence Luhanga, Faculty of Nursing, University of Regina.

The main goal of the study is to explore the public experience, expectations, and perceptions relative to paramedic care in Saskatchewan.

Data collection was initially through focus groups, so far conducted in Regina and Prince Albert. In response to the pandemic, individual interviews are now being conducted remotely. It slows down the process, but the team has adapted. Research at SCoP is supported by Damilola Fadeyi, a Policy Analyst with the College, and Yemi Ogunade, PhD, a post-doctoral research fellow.

Strategically sharing resources with other regulatory organizations helps stretch funding dollars. Rashed is also a researcher with the Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators (COPR), and Damilola and Yemi each do research with other regulators.

Through research projects, the College has learned how to successfully navigate grant application processes and access funding. Developing federal grant

applications, provincial grant applications, developing a research proposal and then successfully applying for research ethics board approval are all complicated processes to navigate.

“The public engagement project is still in the data collection stage so there are no conclusions yet, but the take home message so far is that the general public has limited knowledge about the profession and the College,” says Rashed. “There are mixed feelings. Most of them are very happy with their experience with a paramedic, but some of them are not.”

People who are new to Canada may not even know to call 911. Rural patients have talked about long response times. Others are concerned about the cost. What else could we learn?

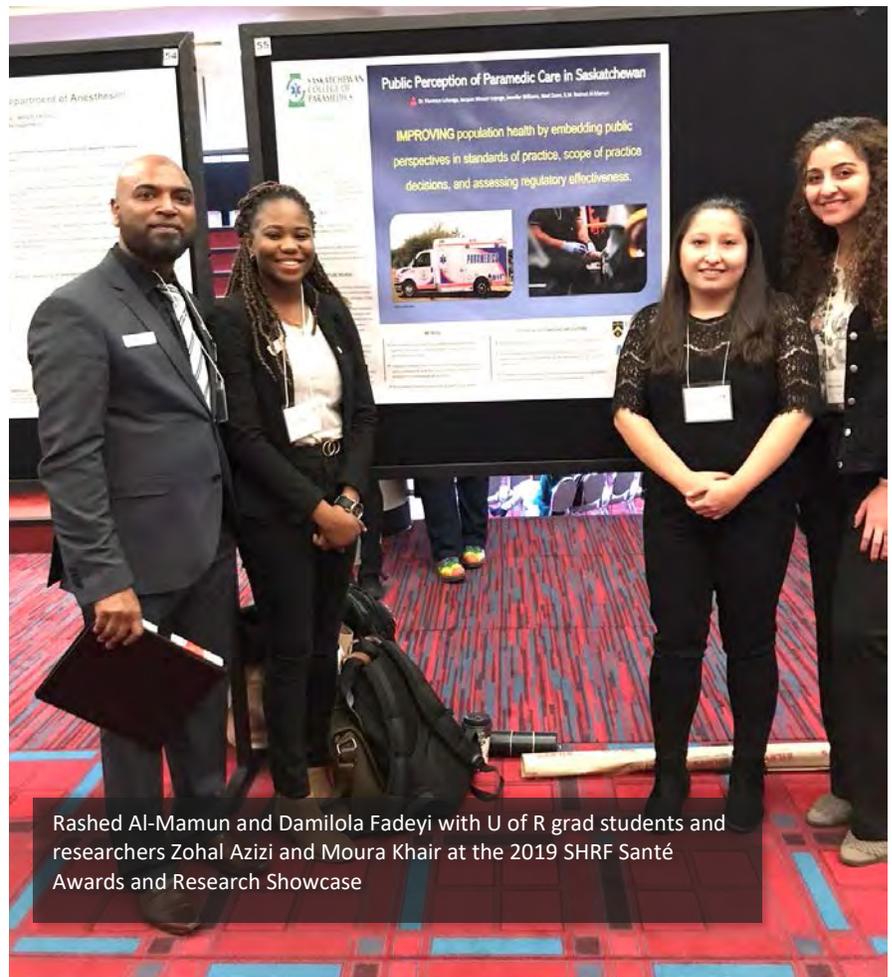
The project is already developing relationships with community members. Engaging more regularly

with different perspectives, College staff have been learning how to offer tobacco to elders and how to tie tobacco for ceremony, and staff joined members of Council and individuals from other health care regulators in attending a Blanket Ceremony to understand our local history from a perspective that has not always been taught.

The global pandemic has illuminated how much individual responses can vary, and how important each one of us is to the bigger picture. Research can help us make some sense of this and help us adapt.

“I am very excited about the future,” says Rashed. “Recently, we have applied for a federal grant to expand the immersive technology project.”

Hands-free skills assessment via virtual reality and immersive video training have a lot of potential. Good timing, don't you think?



Rashed Al-Mamun and Damilola Fadeyi with U of R grad students and researchers Zohal Azizi and Moura Khair at the 2019 SHRF Santé Awards and Research Showcase

Protocol Manual version 6.1 Spring update

Version 6.1 of the Clinical Practice Protocols manual is now available on our website. The changes to this version include:

- Blood & blood products have been added to the procedure section and removed from the Drug Monographs; timeframe has been changed to 30 min from 24 hours.
- Pandemic protocol has been updated and now includes naso/oro-pharyngeal swabbing
- Refusal of care has been updated; restraints are now within Agitated patients
- Shock protocol now includes vasopressors so shock can be treated as necessary
- Supraglottic airways are now a single procedure, eliminating specific brands

5th Annual SCoP Award

Deadline extended to August 31

The deadline for our annual essay contest has been extended due to the pandemic. The new deadline is August 31.

Two awards of \$500 each are available to be won by members in good standing with the College, or students actively enrolled in a paramedic program.

Since we began offering this award, paramedics in Saskatchewan have researched a variety of topics and issues that have highlighted some of the amazing accomplishments in the province.

In the last five years, the College has developed and participated in research on a variety of topics in order to inform and guide the direction of the College and profession.

Research involving paramedics has grown significantly in Saskatchewan, nationally, and internationally.

This year's award will focus on research and innovation in paramedicine.

Very detailed questions to consider are posted within the guidelines on our website.

New: Pandemic Emergency Licence

Being responsive during a pandemic for a healthcare regulator means creating and issuing an entirely new licence level in a matter of weeks.

On April 17, 2020, the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics began issuing Pandemic Emergency Licences.

As of July 9, 27 people have licensed with this new licence level.

Former members, which includes those who are inactive, non-practicing, retired, or other, may apply for this temporary, 90-day licence if they are wishing to help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To expedite issuance of these licences, the College defined criteria under which previous members can become re-licensed. College staff would like to thank the Education



Parkland Ambulance Care

Committee and Council for their work.

Currency in certificates, Continuing Medical Education, or skills are not required in order to qualify for licensure under the Pandemic Emergency Licence provisions. Criminal record checks are still required and can be obtained locally or online.

Non-practicing / inactive / retired for up to 2-years

- PCP 2011 NOCP, ICP, ACP, CCP will be issued a licence at the level they last held
- EMR, EMT/PCP 2001 NOCP will be issued a licence at the EMR level

Non-practicing / inactive / retired between 2 and 5 years

- PCP 2011 NOCP, ACP, CCP will be issued a licence one level lower than they last held
- EMR, EMT/PCP 2001 NOCP will be issued a licence at the EMR level

Non-practicing/inactive/retired more than 5 years

- All Licence Levels will be issued an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) licence

The Emergency Practicing licence is valid for 90 days with the possibility of an extension as required. This licence is offered at no cost. Anyone wanting to remain licensed beyond the pandemic period will need to fulfill all requirements for licensure.

Professional Conduct Committee update

The College is responsible for the protection of the public, and management of this responsibility is one of the most important roles that the College has.

It is our job to assure the public of the knowledge, skill, proficiency and competency of members in the practice of emergency medical services.

As of June 30, 2020, the professional conduct committee currently has 11 open files under investigation.

Of these, 10 relate to professional misconduct, and 1 relates to professional incompetence.

2021 Licence Renewal

The Saskatchewan College of Paramedics (SCoP) is aware that training sessions and certification classes have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As there is no way to adequately determine when the pandemic will end, we anticipate that some members may be unable to fully meet licence renewal and/or outstanding restriction requirements.

Certifications: waived for 2021

Members will be asked to update mandatory certificates at renewal (i.e.: BLS HCP, ITLS, PALS, PEPP, etc.). Those with expired mandatory certificates will need to obtain a current certificate prior to December 31, 2021.

Continuing Medical Education: waived for 2021

CME is not required for 2021 renewal.

Skills Signoff: still required

As skills are the one area that is most likely to degrade over time, the skill assessments are important to ensuring safe care for our patients.

Members who need their skills assessed to renew for 2021 will still be required to have their skills assessed (or apply for a restriction; restrictions arising out of renewal don't affect how you work).

Members who have outstanding skill assessments from last year (2020 licence restriction) must still complete them but will be granted an automatic extension until December 31, 2021.

As always, skills assessors must have an instructor certification in BLS, PALS, ACLS, or ITLS **and** be at the same licence level or higher as the member being assessed. The skill being assessed must also be within the assessor's scope of practice.

Other Restrictions: still apply

Existing and new restrictions for other reasons (i.e.: Criminal Record Checks, Professional Conduct or Discipline restrictions, etc.) still apply and must be completed by their specific dates.

Restrictions relating to labour mobility gap training requirements will be extended until December 31, 2020 on request by the member (once the initial expiry date has been met).

Members can check the status of their requirements and update them any time online in our new Member Portal.

Licence renewal begins October 1 Renewal deadline is December 1

More information about renewal is always available on our website!

2020 PAC Paramedic of the Year

The Paramedic Association of Canada has announced the recipients of their Paramedic Association of Canada Awards of Excellence for 2020.

Congratulations to Nicholas Henninck, ACP, 2020 PAC Paramedic of the Year!

This award recognizes outstanding



contributions to the Paramedic profession, the patients and communities they serve.

Nick recently released the official music video for his song *I am Strong*, dedicated to those struggling with depression, anxiety, and addiction.

<https://youtu.be/iAswT-IsXmQ>

PARAMEDIC SURVEY

COMPLETE THIS SHORT SURVEY AND YOU COULD WIN A GIFT CARD

- ❖ Are you a **EMR, PCP, ACP or CCP practicing in Canada** during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- ❖ **Share your experience!** This study gives you the opportunity to describe your experience working during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- ❖ You can **complete the survey once or multiple times** as your experience during the COVID-19 outbreak evolves

Scan the QR code or follow the link to complete the survey



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8ZQ9YXY>

- ❖ Survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete
- ❖ Participants have the option to remain anonymous
- ❖ One gift card prize will be drawn per 50 survey responses with a minimum of one draw

For more information, contact:

Lindsey Boechler, ACP, MA
Research Chair, Saskatchewan Polytechnic
Email: lindsey.boechler@saskpolytech.ca
Phone: 1-306-531-6514

