

The Pulse

by SCoP

Saskatchewan College of Paramedics newsletter

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Opportunities
and challenges
of self-regulation

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Opportunities and challenges of self-regulation: Managing expectations and maintaining public confidence

By Virginia Wilkinson

Being a self-regulated profession is a privilege, which in Canada is offered to a small number of licensed professions in the areas of healthcare, legal practice, accounting, engineering, and education. Self-regulated organizations have been granted this status by governments through legislation.

Some self-regulated bodies, such as the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics (SCoP) have also been granted the ability to regulate who can practice in the profession, through licensure.

The College provides regulatory oversight of the paramedic profession; however, the College's overarching role has been clearly defined as protection of the public. In fact, *The Paramedics Act* (Saskatchewan) states that the duties of the College are "to serve and protect the public; and to exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest and not in the interests of the members".

"Professional self-regulation means that it's paramedics that regulate paramedics in Saskatchewan through the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics. It's not politicians, it's not doctors, it's not lawyers. Paramedics regulate what defines a paramedic," said Jennifer Williams, Director of Professional Conduct and Research, SCoP.

There are significant benefits associated with being a self-regulating profession, which means that maintaining that ability is critically important,

"As the regulator in Saskatchewan, SCoP has been granted this very special power to set and maintain the standards of education and training, and the entry into practice for paramedics, so we are responsible for ensuring that standards are met

and that we are addressing, and potentially remediating any unprofessional or incompetent conduct. This is particularly important in the healthcare profession because we are dealing with the health and well-being of people," said Jodi Egeborn, Manager of Professional Conduct, SCoP.

Even though self-regulation is beneficial to the profession, Williams and Egeborn say it also offers challenges.

"I would be lying if I said this wasn't difficult. There are obvious obstacles, including recognizing and giving consideration to the magnitude of stress the complaint or PCC process places on Members and the involved bystanders, including the patient and/or complainant," said Egeborn,

While the College is responsible for regulating the entry to practice, defining education and standards of practice, and setting professional development requirements, it is also responsible for managing the professional conduct of members.

"The Professional Conduct and Discipline Committees are what hold the profession accountable, whether it be for issues of incompetence, or misconduct in the workplace. They are responsible for upholding that standard, and for making members who may have a lapse in judgment or knowledge, accountable for their actions, and for ensuring that the profession doesn't suffer for that misstep," said Williams.

Role of SCoP's Professional Conduct and Discipline Committees

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) is a seven-member body that reviews and investigates all complaints made against members, and then provides recommendations to the Discipline Committee about what, if any, action should be taken.



Jodi Egeborn

Both the PCC and the Discipline Committee are made up of SCoP members and public representatives.

The PCC is tasked with ensuring members have, and use, the appropriate knowledge, skills, proficiency, and competencies in the delivery of emergency medical services in Saskatchewan. It is responsible for ensuring members work within their approved scope of practice.

"It's not so much designed to protect the members but to protect the profession overall," explained Ron Colin, Chair of the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC).

Colin said the PCC is focused on addressing the complaint identified, supporting the profession, and helping the member learn from the incident.

"Our intent is not to be punitive, but rather to help the member understand how they could address a similar situation differently, for better outcomes in the future," said Colin.

"We are not there to be punish or assess punitive measures on the member, we are there to put in place things that we as a committee think will help the member grow and get better, in terms of dealing with patients on the next call, and the call after that," said Colin.

Not all complaints the PCC reviews are received from the public. The PCC also investigates cases that are self-reported by members themselves. “Members continue to recognize situations where they may have acted inappropriately, failed to provide proper treatment or have acted beyond the scope of their licence,” said Colin. “Self-reporting takes courage, so it’s important to acknowledge the professionalism and self-awareness of those members who recognize their errors and proactively report them to the PCC.”

Egeborn believes that although the process is challenging for members involved in the complaint, it plays a critical role in ensuring the skill level of members, and in maintaining the strong and trusted reputation of the profession.

“The recommendations that the PCC are making are impacting members in a very real-time way. This process is not easy for members, but 80% to 90 % of the complaints received are resolved through early or low-level resolution. This type of early level resolution provides members with an opportunity to develop insights that make them better paramedics. Thankfully, there are very few repeat occurrences, which we hope is a

result of self-reflection and the transparency and accountability throughout the complaint process,” she said.

“Maybe there is some skill development that is needed or maybe there are some behaviors that are identified as not always being professional. If we can aid that individual in improving themselves overall, then that makes them a much more employable paramedic, which benefits both the public and the member,” said Williams.

PCC Review Process

Once it receives a complaint from a member of the public, the PCC looks at that complaint from two perspectives.

First it examines the complaint to see if it involved professional misconduct.

“We look at how the member is behaving when they are interacting with the public, and whether they are interacting in a professional and ethical, and a kind and compassionate manner. We want them to understand the dynamics of the situation, and act appropriately,” said Colin.

He adds that SCoP expects members to provide care for the patient in the

best way they can, within the paramedic’s current scope of practice.

Secondly, the PCC looks for professional incompetence in relation to the complaint.

“We have had times when we’ve had calls come in that members have stepped outside of appropriate protocols which they cannot be doing. We have also had issues of gross incompetence reported, where members are clearly not technically competent to be doing what they are doing. So, in both instances we are helping to protect the public by ensuring members are doing their job to the best of their ability,” explains Colin.

While the process of ensuring accountability for actions taken in the profession isn’t always easy or comfortable, Williams, Colin and Egeborn all believe it is important, and results show it is effective.

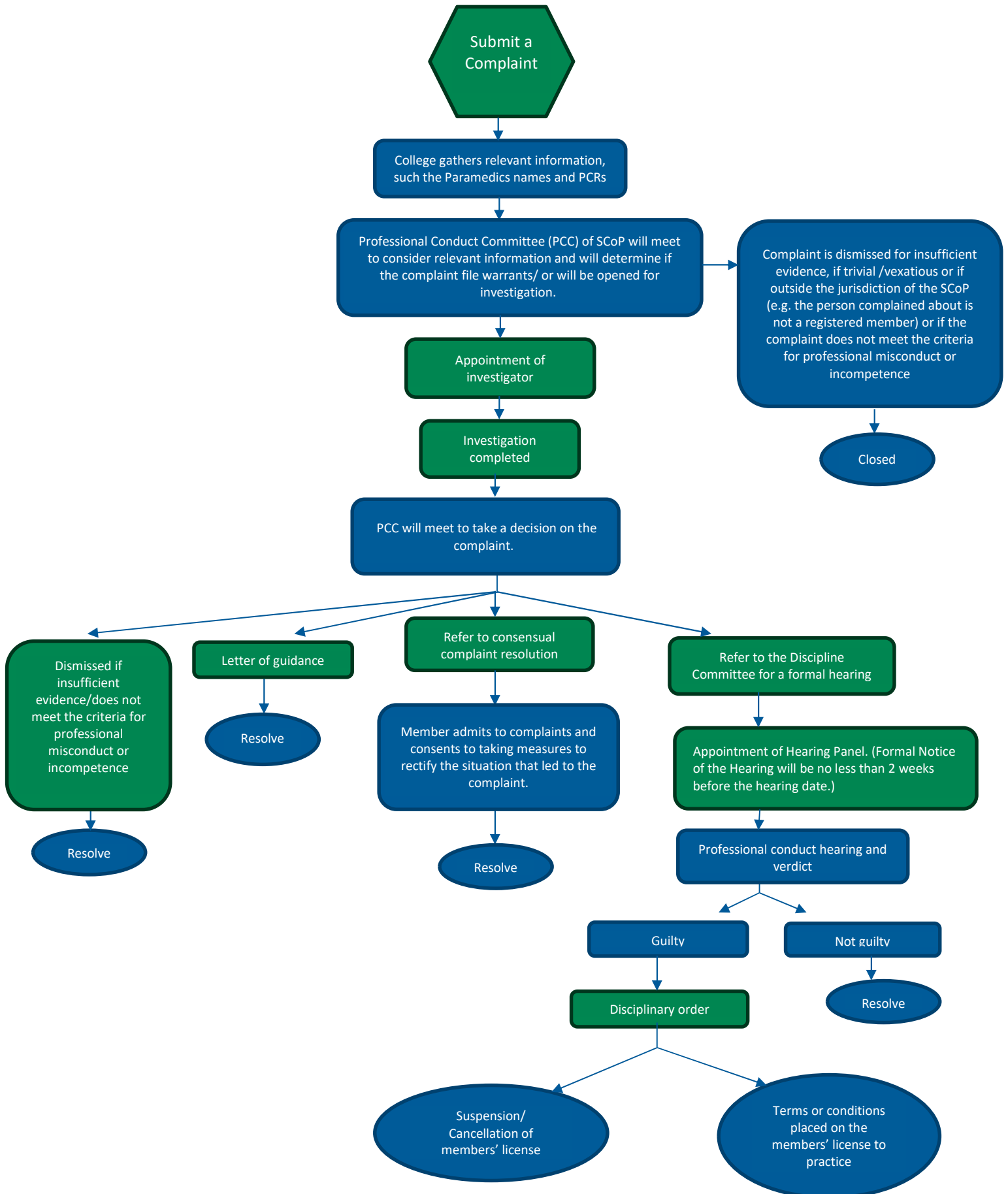
Williams and Egeborn encourage members with questions about the process to reach out to SCoP.

“We want to increase safety for the public and trust in the profession, and we want more confident members, that’s the goal. Education and remediation are natural outcomes of the process in place,” said Egeborn.



Photo by Gilbert Maraboto, Wakaw EMS

Process for Filing and Investigating Complaints



2024 SCoP Council & Committee Nominations: due January 27

Nominations are open and once again we are looking to recruit people from all licence levels and sector experience to participate on SCoP Council and Committees.

There are 3 opportunities for members to join Council. There are 12 opportunities for members to join committees, and 2 opportunities for the public to join committees.

2024 vacancies:

Council:

Vice President (1 position)
Member at Large (2 positions)

Committees:

Audit (1 Member at Large)

Discipline (5 Members at Large; 1 Public Representative)

Education (2 Members at Large)

Legislation and Bylaws (2 Members at Large)

Nominations (1 Member at Large; 1 Public Representative)

Professional Conduct (1 Member at Large)

If you would like to know more about the commitment required to be on either SCoP Council or any of the Committees, please contact Jacquie at 1-877-725-4202, 306-585-0145, or jmesserlepage@collegeofparamedics.sk.ca. The time commitment required may be more manageable than you realize!

Nomination forms are on our website!
Deadline: January 27, 2024

Professional Conduct Committee

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 November 1, the professional conduct committee has received 54 new complaints this year.

Of these, 34 relate to professional misconduct and 23 relate to professional incompetence. Some of the complaints are both misconduct and incompetence.

Personal professional liability insurance implementation now underway

NOTE: This article is a compilation of emails sent directly to members, reprinted here for posterity.

At the 2023 Annual General Meeting, the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics introduced a bylaw proposal to advance the implementation of mandatory personal professional liability insurance (PLI) for all members (non-practicing and practicing). The bylaw was narrowly voted down by the membership, due in large part to the inability of the College to provide more detailed information. SCoP had not anticipated the level of interest in the details of

coverage required.

Subsequent to this, the College held a Q & A information session on Monday May 15th. The intent of this session was to allow members to ask questions about the PLI plan and to enhance the collective understanding of PLI, and why SCoP feels it is so important to both the patient and provider.

It was the College's intent to request a new vote on the proposed bylaw change, however on May 11, the College received notice from the Ministry of Health of a change to legislation (Bill 120) that then went into force on the 15th of May. It is important to make members aware of how this change impacts legislative processes of **all health regulators in Saskatchewan**.

The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2023, formerly known as Bill 120, was introduced into the Legislature in fall, 2022. As mentioned at previous annual general meetings, Bill 120 was based on collaborative work between Network of Interprofessional Regulatory Organizations (NIRO) members and the Ministry to amend the existing health profession legislative framework to support regulatory best practices. On May 10, 2023, the Order in Council (O/C 206/2023) required to bring the bill into force was signed. The terms of the O/C state that the amendments under Bill 120 come into force on **May 15, 2023**.

This new legislation has significant implications for all health regulators including the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics (SCoP) and its operations. The College is now obligated to ensure compliance with the new requirements arising from *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2023*.

One of the more immediate changes that came into force on the passing of this Bill is that all Colleges no longer require member voting on regulatory bylaw amendments including the mandatory Professional Liability Insurance regulatory changes.

This complicated the meeting as the College had been advised by legal counsel that this item could no longer be moved to a vote.

That said, SCoP needed to have a better

understanding of member concerns to ensure that the standards being considered for PLI were not overlooking any significant issues. The College appreciates the many members who attended this meeting and contributed to this discussion.

PLI implementation

The Saskatchewan College of Paramedics has now implemented personal professional liability insurance beginning with the 2024 licensing year. All practicing and non-practicing licence holders are now required to have personal professional liability insurance.

Paramedicine has seen significant evolution over the past number of years, particularly since the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. The growth of the profession is positive for paramedics because it means they are playing a larger, and growing, role in health service delivery. As roles expand, however, the need for professional liability insurance increases.

Professional liability insurance provides both paramedics and patients with protection in situations where errors or allegations of errors are made, and it is required in almost every jurisdiction across Canada. Insurance coverage from an employer is not the same as personal liability insurance.

Insurance is also now a requirement that all health professionals in Saskatchewan (except for the Psychologists) are required to carry. It was endorsed and approved by the Ministry of Health.

The College chose to approve one provider to ensure that everyone had the same standards of coverage. It was simply not possible to review 2,300 policy submissions to ensure consistency, while at the same time approving renewals.

SCoP would again like to thank members for all discussions and feedback on the implementation of this requirement. We also appreciate the patience of our members while we introduced this new requirement.

2023 AGM Wrap Up – Connecting Across Differences

The 2023 SCoP AGM was held on May 4, 2023. Over 230 people attended the Zoom event. The full video of the entire AGM can be found on the SCoP website at <https://collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/resources/agm/>

The morning began with a welcome from SCoP President Matt McGurk, a land acknowledgement from SCoP Executive Director Jacquie Messer-Lepage, and a blessing and prayer from Elder Lorna Standingready.

In his President's Address, Matt McGurk acknowledged another year of constant change and trying to figure out what this new normal will look like. He encouraged members to look back and recognize the perseverance you all have shown. Matt thanked members for adapting to the constantly changing circumstances, protocols, and procedures, and for the sacrifices members make to care for the people of Saskatchewan. Matt emphasized that EMS is a calling that matters to the patients who all remember the care and attention given to them by SCoP members. Matt also thanked Council

and staff for their contributions to the profession and to self-regulation.

Minister Everett Hindley brought greetings from the government. The Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors, and Rural and Remote Health updated members on the Health Human Resources action plan to recruit, train, incentivize and retain healthcare workers. The Minister outlined various EMS enhancements announced this year including 100 more Primary Care Paramedic training seats, one-time funding to support the recruitment and training of Emergency Medical Responders, increases in funding for rural communities, expansion of the Community Paramedicine program, wage parity



funding for contracted EMS providers, investments to support increased operational costs, and funding to enhance EMS communications equipment and technology across the province.

Minster Hindley thanked the College for its leadership and for collaborating with the Ministry of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority. This includes working with the SHA to expand the scope of practice for paramedics in order to launch a treat and referral pilot in Saskatoon to help ease some of the pressures of emergency rooms, and working with the national body to increase the number of licensing exam sittings per year to assist with recruitment challenges.

Executive Director of SCoP, Jacquie Messer-Lepage, presented an update on College activities, noting significant registration increases of Primary Care Paramedics and Emergency Medical Responders. Jacquie also talked about clinical advancements including a re-evaluation of Continuing Education credits, and scope of practice changes such as palliative care protocols and the treat and release pilot. She talked about strategic partnerships that are working towards bridging international medical school graduates to work as paramedics, and discussed how funding for research remains significant to the College to carry out this work and more.

Jacquie also spoke about the financial health of the College, as well as the ongoing virtual reality project that is entirely supported by grant funding. VAPOC, the VR project, will be complete by June 2024 and allow the

College and employers to assess competency in a virtual environment.

This presentation is available as a pdf on the SCoP website, along with the AGM video at <https://collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/resources/agma/>

Next up was a short presentation by Jody Burnett on PSPNET, a free online therapy resource that is available to all public safety personnel and—new this year—their spouses. PSPNET is worth 12 CE credits for members and can be accessed at www.pspnet.ca.

During the open forum for member questions, SCoP staff answered questions about licensing and registration, continuing education, labour mobility, expanding scope of practice, personal professional liability insurance, and the COPR exam.

During the business portion of the meeting, three resolutions were discussed and two were passed by the membership.

The following Regulatory Bylaw changes were passed:

1) Regulatory Bylaw 3 (b) (i) – to remove unnecessary timeline requirements for licensing exam application (Application within 60 days of becoming licensed; Minimum 15 days between exam attempts). The bylaw now reads: 3. A person applying for registration as a practicing member, in addition to meeting requirements of subsection (1), shall:...

b. provide evidence of successful completion of the licensing examination approved by council or evidence of having applied to take the examination. i. A person will be limited to 3 attempts at the licensing examination. ...

2) Regulatory Bylaw 5 (3) – to clarify that new graduates may use program completion as Continuing Education credits for the first renewal following initial

licensure. The bylaw now reads: 5. Maintaining Eligibility as a Practicing Member 3. a person who has completed the requirements for initial registration and has graduated from the initial education program in the previous two years shall be exempt from meeting the continuing medical education requirement for the first licence renewal cycle following initial licensure.

The following Regulatory Bylaw changes were defeated:

Registration Addition of Section 2(1)(f) Provide evidence of personal professional liability insurance in accordance with College policy; Licensure Addition of Section 4(1)(d)(4) Provide evidence of personal professional liability insurance in accordance with College policy.



Dr. James Makokis

The final portion of the AGM was dedicated to education.

Keynote presenter Dr. James Makokis leads one of North America's most progressive family medical clinics serving both LGBTQ2S and First Nation peoples from all over Canada. He is a national and internationally recognized leader and author in the area of Indigenous health and transgender health.

Dr. Makokis is a proud Cree, Two-Spirit physician from Saddle Lake First Nation in Northern, AB and known as one of Canada's most progressive doctors and experts on numerous topics. Through his work, he is on a mission to serve marginalized populations and to change

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CIPSR Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment
ICRTSP Institut canadien de recherche et de traitement en sécurité publique

the outcomes for Indigenous and LGBTQ2S Peoples. Dr. James Makokis and his partner Anthony Johnson were crowned winners of the Amazing Race Canada Season 7, where they received international recognition for their advocacy of marginalized individuals by making the world aware of the impact of discrimination and the mistreatment of anyone labelled as being “different”. They both currently reside on Treaty 6 Territory outside of Edmonton.

The College does not have permission to rebroadcast the presentation by Dr. Makokis so it is not in the AGM video.

The final presentation of the day was by Dan Fraser who returned to the SCoP AGM for the second year in a row. For the past two years Dan has worked as a contract investigator for SCoP. In his work he’s found that many of the complaints filed are for the same issue – patients and their families didn’t feel respected or heard. SCoP members have incredible technical skills but people remember how you made them feel. Dan helped members learn more ways to build trust and rapport with communications strategies.



Dan Fraser

2023 SCoP Election Results

Two members ran unopposed for positions on Council in 2023. Congratulations to Jason Farago (Member-at-Large, Fire) and Jesse Chorkawy, Member-at-Large.

2023 – 2024 SCoP Council

Matt McGurk (President), Noël Dunn (Vice President), Jason Farago (Fire Representative), Michael Slater (Member-at-Large), Donna Dohms (Member-at-Large), Jesse Chorkawy (Member-at-Large), Kyle Sereda (Past President), Karen Gibbons (Public Representative), Joel Gritzfeld (Public Representative)

Thank you to outgoing Council members Olu Adetunji and William Breen for your contributions to Council!



Jesse Chorkawy

Michael Jesse Chorkawy is a Primary Care Paramedic currently working as a field medic with Carbon Medical Services out of Leduc Alberta, and stationed in Northern Saskatchewan north of La Loche. Jesse has worked in EMS in both public services, private services and also has extensive experience in remote and industrial services.

Jesse began his career with Park Ambulance Services in 2005 as an EMR and uptrained to EMT-A through Lacombe Ambulance. He began working in the petroleum industry in Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan, spending a lot of time throughout Western Canada’s oil patch. He has also logged over 500 calls as a Flight EMR and EMT in flights that covered Northern Alberta, BC, Saskatchewan and the southern Yukon, Nunavut and Northwest Territories. Jesse has also transported equipment and supplies along the ice highway to Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk and also worked a few industrial jobs for in the Yukon Territories near the Arctic Ocean.

Jesse and his wife started up Mountain Rose First Aid and CPR, instructing first aid and CPR through Red Cross. When Covid hit and in-person training was suspended, Jesse was selected as an early asset to monitor industrial workers.

Jesse has many hobbies but his greatest interests at the moment are microbiology, medicine, botany music, and swimming.

Meet your new Council members



Jason Farago

Jason started his career in EMS as a PCP in 2004 when he joined the Saskatoon Fire Department after a career change from the field of microbiology. Throughout the years he became a CPR and ITLS instructor, as well as an on-shift instructor for the Saskatoon Fire Department.

Having had the opportunity to train and work with fellow EMS personnel throughout the Saskatoon area, as well as his time on the SCoP council, Jason looks forward to using this experience to continue to serve as the Fire representative for SCoP.