

The Pulse

by SCoP

Saskatchewan College of Paramedics newsletter

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Expanding the Role of the EMR

by Virginia Wilkinson

Across the country, provinces are struggling to offer health care access to all residents. As a result, the scopes of many health care professions are expanding to help cover current gaps in the system. In 2024, the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics (SCoP) began looking at the EMR scope and how, with the appropriate training, it could be expanded to reduce some demands on the system.

“There’s a recognized shortage of Advanced Care and Primary Care Paramedics in the province, and a lot of employers were looking at EMRs to help fill in the gaps. So EMRs have really become a very important piece of healthcare in Saskatchewan,” said Jen Williams, Director, Professional Practice and Research / Acting Registrar

This research also led SCoP to review EMR training requirements and their impact on trainees’ success rates on the COPR exam required for licensure. According to Williams, the existing training also doesn’t adequately support the EMR with the challenges they are currently facing on the job.

“It’s not meeting the needs or the expectations that are being placed on these individuals now. Taking an 80 or

two-week program and then working on a double EMR car in a rural setting where they don’t have much additional support by higher levels of care, really is not preparing them for that expectation and what they need to do,” she said.

EMR INITIAL TRAINING EXPANSION

While reviewing EMR training across the country, SCoP found that most provinces had adopted a training standard of approximately 300 hours.

“This makes sure that when they come out of training, they are really prepared to work as an independent practitioner on a double EMR car as an example, where they might be needed to care for some really sick patients for an extended period of time. So, we needed to make sure that they come out really well prepared for the work environment that they are likely going to be placed in,” explained Williams.

Recognizing the important role EMRs play in the health system and their potential to play an even greater role in supporting emergent health care needs in their communities, **SCoP announced in June 2025 that EMR training would expand from 80 to 300 hours, effective July 1, 2026.**

“Over the years, our applicants have always struggled to pass the COPR exam for entry to practice. So, the request to increase the training hours actually came from our membership. The hope is that it will help our EMR applicants be more successful in passing that exam on their first attempt,” said Destin Ash, an Advanced Care Paramedic and a Clinical Practice Specialist with SCoP.

The additional instruction will assist trainees in developing a better understanding of the services they will deliver in their role and will provide them with a more comprehensive knowledge base which will better position them for success in the COPR exam.

Current EMRs will not be affected by the change in training hours. Individuals who have taken or will have taken the EMR training prior to July 1st will not be required to take the expanded training as long as they pass the COPR exam.

If, however, they fail to meet the requirements of any Exam Restrictions, they will need to take the 300-hour training before re-applying to take the exam or extend their Restriction. The current refresher of 40-to-80-hour program will no longer be available after July 1.



Photo submitted by Trojan Safety

Individuals who wish to become an EMR after July 1st will be required to take the new 300-hour training program. There are currently a number of organizations developing programs to meet the new SCoP training requirements. Once these programs have been approved by SCoP, they will be posted on the SCoP website.

SCOPE EXPANSION FOR EXISTING EMRS

The new training program required to become an EMR will help to support the scope expansion for the role. While the new scope came into effect in January of 2026, some training to ensure existing EMRs can deliver the new services has been approved and more programs are still being developed.

According to Williams, organizations offering training programs are listed on the SCoP website on the Continuing Education page, with more being approved as they are submitted. She expects many programs will be available by the fall of 2026.

While the scope expansion training is not currently mandatory, only those individuals who have received the training and the required certificate will be able to provide the new services. She encourages all EMRs to consider taking the training because of the benefit it offers to both the EMR and their patients. EMRs who have not completed the scope expansion training will have a condition added to their licence which will be

removed once the training is complete. There is no cost associated with the condition or its removal.

“We’d encourage every EMR to take it once they are able to. As the profession continues to grow and develop, we urge everyone to keep up with new skills and get that initial gap training done when they are able to,” she said.

Ash also points out that because this training will be aligned with the standards through the Canadian Paramedic Competence Framework (CPCF) now followed by COPR, it will help to both enable labour mobility and attract new EMRs to the province.

“There are a lot of benefits to it first off for the public. This expanded scope will ease pressure on an already strained health system. For example, in a deadly bleed, EMRs can currently apply direct pressure or a tourniquet, but they haven’t been allowed to use hemostatic dressings. With the new scope and training, they’ll be able to stop the bleed — a major improvement. As well, increasing that scope of practice reduces barriers between jurisdictions, enabling mobility across provinces,” he said.

The skills included in the EMR scope expansion are:

- nasopharyngeal airway insertion
- reducing a fracture
- hemostatic dressings
- monitoring of peripheral intravenous infusions of crystalloid solutions without additives
- monitoring an ostomy drainage system, and
- administration of medications such as:
 - acetaminophen (oral)
 - acetylsalicylic acid/ASA (oral)
 - epinephrine auto-injector (intramuscular)
 - glucose (oral and buccal)
 - ibuprofen (oral)
 - naloxone (intranasal and intramuscular)
 - nitroglycerine (sublingual)
 - salbutamol (metered-dose inhaler)



Jennifer Williams, SCoP

Williams points out the important role these new skills can play in a number of key areas, including interfacility transfers.

“If a patient from a rural healthcare center needs to come into Regina or Saskatoon for additional tests or treatments, enabling the EMR to monitor an IV is significant. Now, the EMR team can transport that patient rather than needing a nurse to come along or having that IV to be discontinued. This means the nurse is available to provide services in the community.”

She says these new skills will enable EMRs to better support their communities and address current gaps in the health system.

“At the College, we are excited about this change. EMRs really haven’t had any significant changes to their scope of practice for many years, so this is quite significant for them. I think it gives them a lot more ability to treat and care for their patients. We think that this will be of incredible value to them in their work environments,” concluded Williams.

[View the updated Saskatchewan Competency Frameworks >](#)

Or go to www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca Professional Practice > Practice Guidelines



Destin Ash, SCoP

New Applicants Educated in USA

The Education Committee has approved a more streamlined process for international applicants who completed their education in the United States. All internationally trained applicants will continue to be directed to COPR for the equivalency assessment process and COPR will use these requirements in their process.

This decision was based on equivalency reviews of the Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic programs in the United States compared to the educational standards in Canada and Saskatchewan.

- Those who have completed an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Emergency Medical Technician-Advanced (EMT-A) program are determined to be equivalent to the Emergency Medical Responder EMR level
- Those who have completed an Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic (EMT-P) program are determined to be equivalent to the Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) level
- Those who have completed a

bachelor's degree (an associate's degree is not equivalent) program or a critical care program will continue to be processed through a full assessment to determine if they are equivalent to the Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) level

Professional Conduct 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.

So far in 2026, the Professional Conduct Committee has received 13 new complaints.

Of these, at least 3 relate to professional incompetence and 10 relate to professional misconduct.

In this time, 10 Medication Errors have also been submitted.

2026 AGM – Registration is Open!

Our Annual General Meeting will be held online via Zoom Webinar on **Wednesday, May 6** from 9:00 a.m. to noon. Registration is now open!

The event will feature College updates and business, and an Open Forum for Member Questions. Video and microphone capabilities are not needed for participants. Questions will be asked by typing them into the Q&A area.

Registration is required to attend!

- **6 Continuing Education (CE) credits** will be awarded to those who attend (NOCP area 1 / CPCF A)
- Individual registration is required for all members to receive CE credits; **please do not share devices**
- Credits will be applied after the meeting by SCoP using login information

[Register for the AGM >](#)

Or go to our website at collegeofparamedics.sk.ca

2026 Council Election

The election for SCoP Council is held online each year when needed. This is an election year!

Two members have put their names forward to run for Vice President on Council, and four members have put their names forward to run for the two Member-at-Large positions on Council.

Voting opened Monday, March 30, at noon. Your ballot has already been emailed to you! Voting ends April 29.

Please note that SCoP uses a two-step process to validate votes:



Photo submitted by Spiritwood – Big River Ambulance

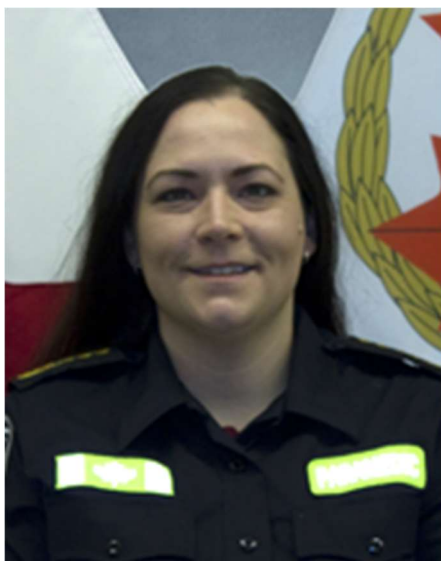
- Once you vote, you will be sent an email and you must click on the link in your email for your vote to be counted. All votes are confidential and counted one time

Successful candidates will be announced at the AGM on Wednesday, May 6. (9am to noon; 6 continuing education credits; registration is open!)

2026 Council Election Biographies

The biographies of the candidates for Vice President are listed in alphabetical order below. You will vote for 1 of the 2 candidates.

Candidates for Vice President:



Robin Focht, ACP, Regina

Robin Focht's journey in EMS began in 2007 in the quiet, demanding world of rural service. It was there she learned that in paramedicine, adaptability is everything. By 2010, she had stepped into the fast-paced environment of Regina EMS as an Advanced Care Paramedic, eventually becoming the "teacher's teacher" as an instructor for nearly every acronym in the book—from ACLS to ITLS.

Today, Robin has traded the ambulance for a broader mission. As

the Coordinator/Superintendent of Clinical Care and Quality Assurance for the SHA, she uses her decades of frontline experience to shape the future of provincial EMS. Whether she's serving on the Board of Regina Paramedics with Heart or the ITLS Sask Education Committee, Robin's career is defined by a single goal: making sure the next generation of medics is even better than the last.

Off the clock, Robin is a summer camping enthusiast who lives in Regina with her husband—and she is currently on a high-stakes mission to find a new four-legged addition to the family this spring.



David Kopperud, ACP, Saskatoon

David Kopperud is an Advanced Care Paramedic in Saskatoon. He currently works as a Deputy Superintendent with Medavie Health Services and supervises B crew. A father of three girls, David has always enjoyed a busy lifestyle, and with two of three still in diapers, he is!

David began his paramedic career in Spiritwood as a PCP in 2014 and started in Saskatoon with MD ambulance in the spring of 2015. After two short years, he made the decision to apply for ACP school and was selected by the senior leadership team. David graduated from the ACP program in the spring of 2019. In the spring of 2021, David was selected for a leadership role as an "Acting Operations Superintendent" and shortly thereafter, became the full-time

supervisor for B crew. In this leadership role, David has successfully led approximately 30 paramedics each shift in anywhere from 50-90 calls. With a supportive leadership style, David has a strong focus on ensuring his team are well cared for, especially after challenging calls.

David is a licensed Advanced Care Paramedic and has recently completed a Harvard leadership course offered to leaders within Medavie. David is a 4th dan black belt, with a long history of martial arts experience in both practice as well as coaching, teaching, and refereeing. David is well known within Medavie for his previous role as co-chair of the Peer Support team and is still very involved in bettering the mental health support and awareness for paramedics. In the peer support role, David is also certified/trained through CISM to run diffusings and debriefings. Medavie Health Services West in Saskatoon is the busiest EMS service in Saskatchewan, and with a large number of traumatic and difficult EMS calls, David has had the privilege in running debriefings for those staff that are in need.

David was selected for an international mission with Medavie to recruit paramedics from abroad. In the fall of 2023, David was a part of a team that travelled to Australia and successfully selected/hired many paramedics to come and work in Canada. David will remain involved in the onboarding process as these new recruits settle into the new, cold environment! As a supervisor, David attends to the highest acuity calls involving major trauma, cardiac arrest, mass casualty events, etc. David has effectively ran some of the most challenging cases paramedics face.

David has been an instructor as SaskPolytech for 4+ years now, teaching both the Primary and Advanced Care programs. David was also recently awarded one of the ambassador positions at Medavie, in where he represents the paramedic industry/profession at recruitment/engagement opportunities or events.

Over the past year, David has served as a SCoP council member (member-at-large). In closing, David would be a

suitable candidate for the Vice President role within SCoP and is clearly motivated to positively effect change and help grow the profession. Focused on progressiveness and engaging with members, David will listen to the members and their concerns and make any and every effort to better the paramedic industry.

Candidates for Member-at-Large:

The biographies of the candidates for the Member-at-large positions are listed in alphabetical order below. You will vote for 2 of the 4 candidates.



Jon Antal, CCP, Regina

Jon Antal is a Critical Care Paramedic with 31 years of progressive leadership and frontline experience in Emergency Medical Services. He currently serves as the EMS Training Captain for Regina Fire and Protective Services, where he oversees clinical education, operational readiness, and professional development for Firefighter Paramedics.

From 2025–2026, Jon held the role of Deputy Chief for the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s EMS South Central portfolio, providing strategic leadership, system oversight, and operational coordination for a diverse regional EMS workforce.

For more than a decade, Jon contributed significantly to aeromedical critical care as the Outreach Education

Lead and a Critical Care Paramedic with STARS Air Ambulance (2012–2025). In this dual role, he delivered high acuity patient care while developing and delivering simulation-based education and clinical training to partners across Saskatchewan.

Jon’s leadership experience also includes key roles within acute care. He served as Manager of Emergency at the Regina General Hospital (2019–2022), guiding multidisciplinary teams in a high-volume tertiary emergency department. Previously, he managed the Dilawri Simulation Centre (2017–2019), advancing clinical education through high fidelity simulation and interprofessional training initiatives.

From 2008–2012, Jon contributed to professional regulation and standards development as an elected member of the Saskatchewan College of Paramedics Council.

Jon is recognized for his deep clinical expertise, commitment to healthcare system improvement, and passion for advancing the paramedic profession through education, mentorship, and leadership.



Ian Brown, CCP, Regina

Ian Brown is a Critical Care Paramedic working for STARS in Regina. Over the course of his career, Ian has worked in a variety of settings including ground, air (fixed wing and rotary), remote clinic, and in the emergency department. A large portion of Ian’s career has been with La Ronge EMS as the Team Leader, where his responsibilities included QA/QI,

education, and working closely with the Medical Director to create local clinical practice guidelines.

Ian completed the Regina PCP program in 2014, Saskatoon ACP program in 2018, STARS Academy in 2024, and STARS induction training in 2025. Ian is a passionate educator, holding instructor status in BLS, ACLS, PALS, ITLS, and CAMATA (Aeromedical Transport). He has delivered education within the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Paramedic Programs, the Medical Emergency Response Training program at RCMP depot, and at the annual SSFRCC First Responder Conference in Moose Jaw.

Ian has volunteered with St. John Ambulance, the Canadian Ski Patrol, Search and Rescue, and as an appraiser for the Dalhousie Division of EMS Prehospital Evidence Based Practice Program.

Ian has completed two terms on the SCoP Discipline Committee and currently sits on the Education Committee. He values innovation, transparency, accountability, and collaboration, and hopes to see more grassroots research to strengthen evidence-based practice. He is committed to supporting an adaptive organization capable of evolving alongside the ever-changing landscape of paramedicine.



Donna Dohms, ICP, Estevan

Donna Dohms is an Intermediate Care Paramedic for Saskatchewan Health Authority EMS serving Estevan. She has been employed full time since 1989, where she has had the pleasure of serving in various communities including Estevan, Melville, Moosomin, Humboldt, Preeceville and Nipawin. Donna's experience is in rural, urban, CEC facility, supervisory, and as an EMS Education Coordinator. She is also a member of the Provincial Peer Support Team for group and individual peer support.

Donna began as an EMR in 1989, achieving her EMT/PCP in 1991 at SIAST. Shortly after, she achieved her EMT-A/ICP in 1997 and still continue to advance her education through University of Regina learning opportunities. Donna has also been an instructor for St. John Ambulance, HSF, and Red Cross for 23 years, deciding to retire from teaching to allow for up-and-coming instructors to gain experience and advance.

Donna served on the SCoP Education Committee from its inception in 2010 to 2013 and was active on the Audit Committee, the Protocol Committee, and on the Paramedic Practice Committee with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. She was active on Council from 2022 to 2024 and has enjoyed serving her peers in this capacity. Donna feels it is very rewarding to be a part of designing how our profession advances. She encourage others to consider joining in this capacity as well, as the Paramedic

profession is about to see incredible advancement in the near future, which you should have a voice in designing. In 2011, Donna was humbly honored with the Governor Generals Exemplary Services award in EMS.

Donna currently resides in Estevan where she is employed full time and will become integrated into the community with various volunteer activities and interests. During the summer she can be seen cruising the highways on two wheels, and volunteering with the PTSD foundation called Rolling Barrage when they tour through the province in August every year.

In running for Council, Donna hopes her broad experience base will supplement her ability to collaborate with the team members on Council and the other interested parties like PSCS and Sask Polytech to make sound decisions for our future.



Michael Hengstler, ACP, Regina

Michael Hengstler is an Advanced Care Paramedic, educator, and healthcare leader based in Regina, Saskatchewan, with extensive experience in frontline paramedicine, paramedic education, and professional governance. He is recognized for delivering high-quality prehospital care, mentoring paramedics at all stages of their careers, and advancing clinical excellence through training, quality assurance, and system improvement.

In addition to his operational role, Michael serves as Paramedic Faculty at Saskatchewan Polytechnic where he has contributed to the modernization of paramedic education through the integration of advanced simulation technology, contemporary simulation methodologies, electronic documentation, and virtual learning environments. His work extends nationally as an Accreditation Surveyor with Accreditation Canada, where he evaluates paramedic education programs and supports the maintenance of professional standards across Canada.

Michael is actively involved in provincial leadership, having chaired and served on multiple committees that influence paramedic education, scope of practice, and trauma care policy. A recipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal, he brings a disciplined, evidence-informed approach to advancing paramedic practice through leadership, education, and clinical policy development.

AGM Resolution

The following resolution was submitted to the College and will be presented to SCoP members for discussion at the AGM on May 6. Members who have questions about this resolution should submit them ahead of time to jmesserlepage@collegeofparamedics.sk.ca who will then pass them on to the movers.

PLEASE NOTE: The College no longer requires a vote on Resolutions; see section 4 in the Bill 120 information piece following the resolutions. Council is now permitted to make bylaw amendments and submit them to the Minister.

TITLE: REVIEW OF HOURS OF WORK, ON-CALL PRACTICES, AND FATIGUE RISK IN PARAMEDIC PRACTICE

WHEREAS: Paramedics in Saskatchewan, particularly in rural and mixed-service models, commonly work extended hours, prolonged periods of on-call coverage, and variable scheduling patterns that may not provide adequate opportunity for rest; and

WHEREAS: Extended on-call requirements often result in practitioners being responsible for emergency response for long durations without consistent rest, contributing to physical and cognitive fatigue; and

WHEREAS: Fatigue has been identified in healthcare and paramedicine research as a significant factor associated with increased clinical risk, impaired decision-making, and reduced practitioner wellbeing; and

WHEREAS: Variability in compensation structures—particularly regarding paid vs. unpaid on-call hours—may influence practitioner capacity to balance workload, rest, and professional expectations; and

WHEREAS: The Saskatchewan College of Paramedics has the legislated authority to set and recommend practice guidelines, standards, and expectations that support safe, competent care and practitioner wellbeing; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Saskatchewan College of Paramedics conduct a review of hours-of-work practices, on-call requirements, and fatigue-related risks across Saskatchewan paramedic services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: SCoP explore the development of evidence-informed guidance or best-practice recommendations related to safe scheduling, fatigue mitigation, and on-call workload to support safe and sustainable practice, and report findings or proposed next steps to the membership at a future AGM.

Moved by: Brett Hart