

The Pulse

Paramedics: Trusted – Professional

Saskatchewan College of Paramedics • Newsletter #9, October 2012

Online makes renewal easier – enter early to win!

SCoP's new online system is making many administrative processes easier for members. SCoP eApplication, the online renewal system, opened in August. Members who renew before October 31, with all renewal requirements met, are entered into an early bird draw. The winner will receive a 16GB Wi-Fi iPad.

To successfully complete the renewal process, you will need to submit:

- electronic renewal form;
- evidence that you have met the educational requirements to maintain eligibility as a member; and
- the \$450 renewal fee.

If all renewal requirements are met, you will be approved and your name will be placed on the SCoP website as being licensed for 2013. You can also advise your employer that you are licensed to practice for 2013 and not worry about your renewal during the busy Christmas season.

All renewals need to be done by December 1. **Any renewals done after December 1 will be charged late fees every week until the renewal is finished. Any members who have not renewed by the end of January will need to go through the reinstatement process.**

SCoP is also in the process of adding five new online processes. Members can now register their change of status, submit CME for approval and submit proof of educational sessions taken throughout the year, online. In the new year, incoming members will soon be able to submit their initial registration and returning members will be able to initiate a reinstatement process online.

The new SCoP ePortfolio service is an online member site that allows members to log in using their user name and password and see their personal information, as well as the status of their mandatory certificates, mandatory skills and CME that are on file with the College. The site enables you to see your submitted educational information as soon as it is approved, at any time during the year.



Annual license fee to increase slightly

Practitioners will see a slight increase in their annual license fee for 2014. The fee will increase from \$450 to \$460. The annual licensing fee is based on the College *Administrative Bylaws* and policy. It is determined using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September and rounded up to the nearest \$5. The CPI for September 2012 was 1.2%, which, when applied to the 2013 fee of \$450, raises the 2014 fee to \$460. The fee increase outlined in the *Administrative Bylaws* was voted on and approved at SCoP's 2010 Annual General Meeting.



Save the date! The 2013 SCoP AGM is coming!

SCoP's Annual General Meeting will take place on April 19, 2013, at the Saskatoon Inn, in Saskatoon. We want to thank Saskatoon Fire Services for assisting us in planning the AGM.

We'd like to encourage all members to come out and assist SCoP in setting goals and direction for 2013-14.



**SASKATCHEWAN
COLLEGE OF
PARAMEDICS**

Saskatchewan PCPs to see skills expand

The skills available to PCPs in Saskatchewan will expand over the next few years. SCoP's Council has made a decision to align with the 2011 National Occupational Competency Profile (NOCP) standards which will ensure PCPs have access to a commonly used set of skills that will have a significant positive impact on patient care in the province. The 2011 NOCP guidelines are national guidelines which outline the skills required by paramedics at all levels.

"The intent of this decision is to enhance patient care. This approach really brings treatment to the patient rather than delaying treatments until the patient reaches the hospital. We're looking to implement some of the most commonly used medications and the skills that will have the greatest positive impact on the patient," said Derek Dagenais, President, SCoP. This decision aligns with other paramedic regulators and educational institutions across the country and will allow Saskatchewan PCPs a similar scope to that in other provinces.

Dagenais said that the use of IV therapy is an example of the types of skills which PCPs will acquire.

"Public safety not only involves a reactive approach, but also proactive measures such as the development of care plans which benefit the patient. So this is giving paramedics those skills that ensure good patient care," said Dagenais.

Prior to making a decision in favour of aligning with the 2011 NOCP standards, SCoP surveyed currently licensed EMTs and PCPs for input into the proposed new initiative. As well, surveys went out to employers, health regions, and meetings were held with various stakeholders to obtain input on the proposed changes. A strong majority of the responses expressed excitement and support for expanding the PCP scope.

SIAST is in the midst of aligning its program with the new skills identified in the profile. As SIAST is tasked

with educating new members and SCoP is tasked with setting requirements for current working members, the training requirements set by SCoP will not directly align to the SIAST training requirements as they will have to reflect our members' experience. SCoP is therefore

examining avenues to offer supplemental training for PCP practitioners who are currently working in the field. The organization is very interested in identifying home-based or at work training options to minimize the impact this change will have on current PCPs. There are approximately 1,200 PCP and EMT practitioners in the province who could be eligible to take the training and access these new skills.

As well, SCoP's Education Committee is being asked to make evidence-based recommendations on medications, number of approved IV starts, the educational components required for the remainder of the 2011 NOCP upgrades, time frames for implementation, as well as the consequence for incomplete training or failure to upgrade. Once further details are finalized, a review of the protocols will be required to document any required protocol changes and

submit them for approval to the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

While the PCP Scope Change Plan is still in the developmental stage, SCoP's Council is hoping training and information on the new approach will be available within the next year.

SCoP is now urging current EMTs who are interested in accessing these new skills to consider bridging to the current PCP level so they're ready to take advantage of the 2011 NOCP training that will be outlined in the PCP Scope Change Plan once it is implemented.

"Usually, SCoP is in a reactive role as a regulatory body, but here we have the potential to implement patient treatment regimens that can significantly impact patients in a positive way. This really is a very positive step for the enhancement of patient care," said Dagenais.



Taking a leave, but worried about your license? Read on ...

Ever wondered if there was a way to keep your license up while you're on maternity leave, education leave or just testing the waters in another province without having to pay full price for a practicing license? SCoP has a non-practicing license for just these types of circumstances.

Many paramedics step away from the profession for a short period of time over their careers for a variety of reasons. Maternity leaves, illness, disability, a short-term move to another province all can take people out of the profession for a period of time. If members allow their licenses to lapse during this time, it can mean significant work, cost and a re-taking of the licensing exam to be reinstated in the profession. To reduce the need to be reinstated, SCoP offers members a non-practicing license.

"It's a great way to ensure you are able to stay connected to the profession in times when you need to step away for a short period," said Sheri Hupp, Executive Director, SCoP.

If you were to let your license lapse, you would be

required to pay a \$275 reinstatement fee, provide significant documentation and re-take the licensing exam.

However, the fee for the non-practicing license is just \$50 as opposed to the \$275, plus regular licensing fees charged to be reinstated. As well, less documentation is required when members move from the non-practicing to the practicing license and a re-taking of the licensing exam is not required.

Members can hold the non-practicing license for up to two years before being required to take a refresher course when moving back to a practicing license, and up to five years before being required to re-take the full course.

The license is also useful for paramedics who have moved into management roles and who are no longer practicing. For these members, if they never intend to be practicing members again, the non-practicing license can be purchased indefinitely.

For more information on the non-practicing license, contact SCoP at (306) 585-0145.

Registration Committee winds down

SCoP's Registration Committee, which was created to oversee the installation of the College's online registration system and the new provincial exams, has finished its work. As a result, the committee has been wound down, and any remaining duties have been transferred to the organization's Education and Bylaws Committees.

Chris Warren, an Advanced Care Paramedic in Meadow Lake, who was a member of the Registration Committee has just been acclaimed as a member of the Nominations Committee, largely because of his good work on the Registration Committee.

"I think it's important to stay involved. We should all try to play a role in SCoP, because it's our College, and it's really important to the profession. The standards set by the College are critical to our work," he said.

Warren is employed full time with Meadow Lake Ambulance, but he also works with the Meadow Lake Fire



Department. He started as a non-career firefighter nearly 20 years ago and became a paramedic in 2003. Warren was on the Registration Committee for its entire existence, joining the committee with the initiation of the College in 2008.

Warren is just one of a group of 29 members who are now sitting on SCoP's seven committees. These individuals do everything from providing oversight on SCoP's finances, addressing member

discipline issues, developing legislation and bylaws for SCoP, providing direction on members' educational needs, managing professional conduct of members, and encouraging member participation in SCoP. To see a list of SCoP's committees and who's sitting on them, click on the following link, www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/about-us/committees.php, or visit our website at www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca.

Help recognize members who've gone 'Above and Beyond'

Do you know of a fellow paramedic with more than 25 years in the field who's provided exemplary service to your community or the profession? If so, read on ...

SCoP and the provincial government are encouraging residents to nominate exemplary individuals for the Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal. Those nominated must have worked in a field where they have ensured the safety, security and protection of Saskatchewan citizens for at least 25 years. Both paid and volunteer members qualify.



"Any award that recognizes individuals for what they do for others is good. This award is especially important because people working in this field often go un-thanked for the contributions they make to their communities every day," said Dan Lewis, Vice-President, SCoP.

To be eligible for the award, the individuals nominated must have provided some form of exemplary service where they have gone 'above and beyond' what would normally be expected of an employee in the field. This could be either a heroic act of service, a longer term mentorship role in the field or something similar.

Nominators are encouraged to profile this exceptional service in the material they send in to the selection committee. **All nomination forms must be signed by either SCoP or SEMSA and then submitted to the Saskatchewan Government's Protocol Office by no later than November 30, 2012.** Nomination forms are available from the Saskatchewan Government website on the Protocol Office (Office of Provincial Secretary) web pages, www.ops.gov.sk.ca/spsm. For more information, call (306) 787-8965.

Health care regulatory bodies ensure public safety

If you know of someone who is looking for information on the various health regulatory bodies in Saskatchewan, there's new information that can help them.

The Network of Inter-Professional Regulatory Organizations (NIRO) has published a pamphlet outlining the various options available to individuals with complaints. It also lists all health regulatory agencies in the province that deal with people, along with contact information for the organizations. The pamphlet is available on the home page of the SCoP website under the Important Resources column, www.collegeofparamedics.sk.ca/resources/NIRO%2023-01%20Web.pdf.

The material is a great resource for anyone wanting information or dealing with a complaint about services in the health care field. Please feel free to refer anyone with questions about professional conduct in the health care field to this document.



ACP needed to help develop PCP and ACP national exam

SCoP is looking for an ACP volunteer to represent Saskatchewan on the COPR Exam Working Group. The group is made up of paramedics who've been tasked with setting standards for, and writing exam questions for, the national ACP exam. SCoP has a PCP volunteer who has been involved with the group since it was initiated, but we now need to add an ACP member to the group. The position is a two-year term and would require occasional travel within Canada; all travel expenses would be covered by COPR. If you are interested in putting your name forward for the position, please contact the SCoP office at (306) 585-0145.

Member profile – Paramedic finds rural experience beneficial

Rhonda Mortensen has been working in EMS in rural Saskatchewan for the past 19 years, and she believes it's her experience in the rural setting that's helped make her a strong health care provider.

Mortensen began work with Humboldt and District Ambulance Service in 1993 soon after finishing high school.

"It wasn't really something I had thought about. I was initially interested in dentistry," said Mortensen. But after learning about the field through an EMT acquaintance, she applied to the program and was accepted. After the three-month course, she was hired at Humboldt and District Ambulance Service.

"Humboldt's home for me. I grew up in the surrounding area of Humboldt, so it was perfect," she said.

Her employer did more than help with her career path. Mortensen's future husband was also a paramedic working at Humboldt and District Ambulance. They were married in 2002.

"You know it's great – he understands. When I come home from a stressful day he knows how I'm feeling."

Mortensen says her career path has evolved with the profession. She said when she started, Humboldt and District Ambulance Service was a BLS service which offered a basic level of care. Then, in 1998, her employer took advantage of an opportunity to move the service to an EMT advanced level, a level which was initially only offered to rural services. She started in the profession as an EMT and over time has upgraded her skills to become a supervisor with ICP accreditation.

"It's a great place to learn about the spectrum of calls you can get as a paramedic."

"I think a person just kind of grows with the times."

While she has seen a lot of growth in the profession, she thinks the greatest evolution has taken place over the past five years. She strongly believes that evolution has significantly impacted patient outcomes for the better. The creation of SCoP, along with the changes in community needs and the lack of physicians causing hospital closures, played a key role in this evolution.

While many paramedics have started in rural Saskatchewan and then moved on to urban services, Mortensen says she prefers working in a rural setting.

"As a rural provider, you are a bit limited in your resources, so you have to be creative and really utilize what you have



Rhonda Mortensen

on hand, and because of the distance to hospitals, you really get to use your skills."

She also says rural providers can have a greater opportunity to participate in the full continuum of care.

"For example, if we pick up an elderly person with a fractured hip at her house and bring her to Humboldt hospital for initial treatment and x-rays, we know we'll likely be taking her on to a tertiary hospital, and then in a few days we will have a good chance of bringing her home – so we end up seeing the full picture."

One of her most memorable calls was an emergency call with a patient complaining of gastrointestinal bleeding. They were transporting the patient from scene and the patient was stable, when suddenly he began to breathe with obvious difficulty. Shortly after, the cardiac monitor was showing a shockable rhythm. She shocked him and before long he was back to talking with her.

"It was incredible – we were in the right place at the right time. It's calls like that that are the most memorable. If we hadn't been there at that time, the outcome might not have been so successful."

While Mortensen said the 24-hour shifts used by rural services can be problematic for paramedics with families, she believes working in rural areas is critical to the development of a knowledgeable provider.

"It's a great place to learn about the spectrum of calls you can get as a paramedic. Because rural organizations are typically smaller, you really do get to deal with everything, and use the full scope of your skills. We encourage all new paramedics to spend some time with a rural service before pursuing other opportunities," she said.

New public reps on SCoP Council

SCoP has two new public representatives on Council; they are Betty Hoffart and Tom Janisch.

Betty Hoffart is the CEO of the Certified Management Accountants (CMA) of Saskatchewan. She brings a wealth of volunteer board experience and financial expertise. She worked at SaskTel for 28 years and then has been the CEO of CMA Saskatchewan for the past nine years. She's been on numerous boards, including: Family Service Regina, the United Way Audit Committee, the Treasury Management Association of Canada, CMA Saskatchewan, the SaskTel Pension Board, and others. She finds being on SCoP's Council exciting because it's such a new organization.

"New organizations have a real opportunity to learn from and build on the experiences of others; it will



be exciting to be a part of that development," she said.

In addition to sitting on Council, she serves on SCoP's Audit Committee.

Tom Janisch is a former RCMP officer and trainer. Currently, he works at SaskPower on organizational performance improvement and

training related matters. He applied to become a public representative in response to an advertisement placed in the newspaper by the Ministry of Health Workforce Planning Branch.

"It looked interesting. It's something new. I was looking for something that would get me involved in the community in some way, where I was able to apply some of my skills," he said.

He worked with the RCMP for 26 years in a number of locations, including Iqaluit. As a member of the RCMP, he worked in the Proceeds of Crime section and then moved into human resources to work on training related matters. In addition to sitting on Council, he serves on SCoP's Discipline Committee.



Watch your e-mail!

Communication between the College and members is becoming increasingly important. We need to make sure all members receive a variety of critical information pieces promptly, including information about protocol changes or license renewal information. Because of this, our information is being sent to members via e-mail – so it is really important that:

- members have provided a current and correct e-mail address to the College (you can check this by logging into your member profile at any time);
- members check their junk mail and mark SCoP messages as acceptable; and
- members regularly check their e-mail for SCoP messages.

Interested in becoming more involved with SCoP?

We've got two members-at-large positions opening up on Council in the spring of 2013. If you know of someone who would be interested in this position, watch our website for nomination forms which will be posted shortly.

Members who unsubscribe need to be aware that they will not receive information about protocol changes or renewal information but will still be held accountable for these changes or updates.

SCoP commits that it will restrict the number of e-mails it sends out and will ensure it is not sending unnecessary information.



A care co-ordinator at a rural Nova Scotia community health care centre

photo courtesy Nova Scotia government

Rural patients and providers to benefit from new collaborative health teams

Patients and providers in rural Saskatchewan may soon benefit from a new approach to health care delivery. The Ministry of Health is providing support to regions interested in following a health care model recently established in rural Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia Collaborative Emergency Centre or CEC model fosters a much more collaborative approach to health services delivered by physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, paramedics and others, such as social workers, working in rural communities. Health officials in Nova Scotia developed the model to enhance rural patient access to health services and to reduce the demand on rural physicians who can be virtually working, or on call, around the clock.

“Although it has been just over one year of service for the most established of Nova Scotia’s four CEC sites, communities served by this approach are already seeing much greater stability of health services and a significant increase in residents’ ability to access primary health care,” said Jason Liggett, Manager, CEC Project, for the Ministry of Health.

The Nova Scotia model is a new approach being considered as part of a broader initiative to strengthen primary health care in Saskatchewan. With the model, a collaborative team is available to rural patients 24 hours a day. The day-time team addresses primary (or “day to day”) health care issues and consists of physicians, nurse practitioners and other providers. The day team would be available from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m., seven days per week.

The night team would be available from 8 p.m. – 8 a.m.,

seven days a week, and would address urgent care access issues. The team would consist of a registered nurse and a paramedic or two registered nurses, who would together assess the patient and either release him or her, refer him/her to the day team or transfer the individual to another facility. The night team would run their decisions by a physician over the phone.

The new approach will offer a number of really important benefits to rural patients and health providers. It will reduce the call burden on rural physicians; it will reduce health care disruptions in rural communities often caused by the departure of local physicians; and it will enable nurses and paramedics to use their full scope of practice.

“This should be very exciting for rural paramedics because it will allow them to be fully integrated into a team of health care professionals, ensuring they are part of the solution developed for the patient.”

The initiative will only be implemented if the community and the local health care providers support the approach.

“Nova Scotia strongly recommended that our health regions only implement this model after extensive community and local health provider discussions, because it will only be successful if the community and local providers are behind it,” he said.

Liggett says the ministry is already talking to a number of regions about the initiative. The Ministry of Health is now working with health regions to determine critical factors for success and other criteria that can be used to identify potential sites.