



October 17, 2016

Kevin Newman, Host and Managing Editor

CTV – W5

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Re: [W5: 9-1-1 Roulette](#)

Dear Kevin Newman,

The Ontario Paramedic Association is a not for profit corporation that advocates for patients and paramedics. We pursue the highest ethical, educational and clinical standards.

The W5 feature “9-1-1 Roulette” covered one very unfortunate incident where a male suffered a cardiac arrest in the presence of paramedics and subsequently died in hospital. We acknowledge death is often tragic and brings despondency to all those involved. Yet, every paramedic in Ontario is trained to do everything in their power to preserve life. As paramedics, the worst call we respond to involves family members who have lost a loved one. Any person would feel terrible for the loss this widow endured and we too offer compassionate empathy.

However, cardiac myopathies are not caused by paramedics. What is consistent across the healthcare system is the majority of patients make it to a Percutaneous Coronary Intervention centre and regardless of treatment interventions, a few do not. This has little to do with skill.

All paramedics must obtain their own college education, pass 6 hour provincial exams, comply with rigorous Base Hospital evaluations and compete for highly coveted jobs, before they can administer treatments to any patient. The selection process in Ontario is designed to ensure the best paramedic clinicians are administering care at any given moment. There are also patient safety formulas built into medical directives that protect patients from harm; as not every medication is beneficial in every situation.



Paramedics are Highly Skilled

Ontario paramedics are highly skilled at all levels and the public should be proud of the quality care that paramedics can provide. Citizens should have confidence in the clinical abilities of paramedics. The following key points will offer a factual and balanced perspective:

- All paramedics beat hundreds of applicants for a chance to pay out-of-pocket, for their own community college education, in dedication to their vocation
- Ontario Primary Care Paramedics (PCP's) have the longest didactic curriculum and highest training of any province
- PCP's provide high quality medical care during life-threatening emergencies
- PCP's are employed by every paramedic service in Ontario
- PCP's are an important component of Ontario's multifaceted healthcare system
- PCP's predominantly staff Community Paramedicine Programs which have been proven to keep Ontarians alive, reduce healthcare costs and hospital admissions by over 50%
- PCP's staff many specialty units throughout Ontario (Tactical, Marine, Bike, Support and Air Ambulance units) where they have successfully resuscitated many patients
- When Firefighters or Police Officers suffer a medical or trauma emergency in the line of duty, they trust, respect and rely on paramedics to render high quality medical care
- A PCP wishing to become an ACP often does so at an extraordinary financial obligation as the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities* does not recognize nor subsidize ACP programs. Municipalities rarely pay for paramedic college curriculums.
- National Abacus Data sanctioned by the Paramedic Association of Canada indicates that 93% of the public respects paramedics and that paramedics are one of the most trusted and strong professions in Canada
- PCP's, ACP's and CCP's respond to 1.1 million calls per year across Ontario and just over 99% of all patients are alive upon arrival at hospital (Note: this figure also includes many patients who were resuscitated and survived to discharge after being vital signs absent)

In short, Primary, Advanced and Critical Care Paramedics all have the same objective: to preserve life by providing high quality clinical care to our patients in any environment. Paramedics want nothing more than to take someone's bad day and make it better.

Self-Regulation

All stakeholders have given input into the self-regulation application that was submitted in 2011 and the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council (HPRAC) has rendered their



recommendation. As with any input process, stakeholders were expected to be on a different page – and that is exactly what occurred. There is no more discussion or debate to be had on self-regulation. According to established process, that door is closed.

The Ontario Minister of Health, the honourable MPP Eric Hoskins has been saddled with a "yes/no" decision since MPP Deb Matthews' days in 2013. Ontario is waiting for an answer that can only be rendered by one person.

Balancing the Story

There are 2 types of organizations in Ontario who are paid by members to represent completely different aspects of frontline paramedicine.

- 1) Mandatory Labour Unions (CIPP, CUPE, OPSEU, SEIU, UFCW and Unifor)
- 2) Voluntary Professional Associations (OPA)

CTV certainly had an abundance of options, but our investigation has revealed none of these organizations were contacted prior to the episode being aired.

As a matter of balancing the story, the Ontario Paramedic Association was not contacted and had absolutely no knowledge that patient advocacy and paramedic skills would be called into question. We were also unaware that the PCP scope of practice and their incredible track record of treating injuries and saving lives would be so insolently disrespected. Yet, the www.OntarioParamedic.ca link was included below your [online](#) news story, which clearly indicates you were aware of the existence of our organization.

Furthermore, choosing to edit a disparaging statement from Ms. Calberry into the closing segment of your story has inelegantly suggested that citizens take unsafe actions rather than call paramedics. This is a very dangerous message that could put a patient, vehicle occupants, pedestrians and motorists on the roadways at grave risk. Canada has one of the best healthcare systems on the globe. Within that framework, Ontarians receive some of the best clinical care from paramedics who are highly trained to deliver life saving medical skills and procedures in a multitude of unstable environments.

Regardless, the opportunity for such a counterstatement was not offered to any of the aforementioned groups. By neglecting to do so, emotion was never given the opportunity to be balanced with reason.



Closing

We therefore politely ask that you remove the www.OntarioParamedic.ca link as we do not wish to be affiliated with a media feature that concentrates on only one case while inflicting unsubstantiated and broad harm on paramedicine, healthcare and the life altering decisions people must often make under duress.

We encourage you to kindly consider the impact a media outlet such as CTV's W5 can have on civilians across the country when you broadcast such an unbalanced and unsafe message.

With disappointment,

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