

Emergency Health Services

EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

MARCH 26, 2024

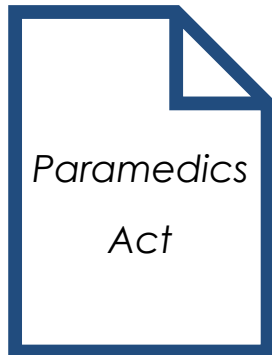
Background

- ▶ EHS provides province-wide emergency medical response, care, and transport for patients in need.
- ▶ EHS works with Emergency Medical Care, Inc. (EMC) who operate the EHS system.
- ▶ EMC is a single, central operator of ambulatory EHS across the entire province. They manage all ambulances and paramedics 24/7 everywhere in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ In instances when ambulances are not rapidly or ideally available to patients, EMC coordinates with local Medical First Responder groups (MFRs) throughout Nova Scotia to provide rapid, life-stabilizing care while patients wait for paramedics in an ambulance arrive to the patient(s).
- ▶ Department of Health & Wellness has recently enhanced its regulatory oversight of EMC and the EHS system to improve readiness and reliability of ambulance throughout the province to meet increase care needs.

Legal Context



- ▶ Must be **under agreement with the Minister** of Health & Wellness to operate/provide EHS
- ▶ Only one entity in Nova Scotia, **EMC, is authorized to provide emergency and medical response**, care, and transportation anywhere in Nova Scotia.
- ▶ Any other entity providing these services, especially in response to emergency or 911 calls, is unauthorized and **would be operating outside established laws**.



- ▶ No entity or individual is permitted to practice paramedicine or provide medical care while a patient is being transported **except licensed paramedics or health professionals working with EMC**.
- ▶ MFRs are permitted to respond to emergency calls while waiting for an ambulance response but are **not legally authorized to transport** patients.

Unauthorized providers of emergency medical care and transport pose significant risks to patients, communities, EHS providers and MFRs, and the broader EHS system. Liabilities associated with these risks would shift to the patient and unauthorized provider if carried out without authority.

Improvements

Over the last 24 months, the Department of Health & Wellness has made the following investments in the Western NS region:

- ▶ Implementation of Low Acuity Transport (LAT), Patient Transfer Units (PTU), Medical Transport Service (MTS), and SPEAR units, putting more ambulance back on the road
- ▶ Opening Yarmouth-based Paramedic Training program (and other investments/supports for Paramedic Students)
- ▶ Non-Critical Care LifeFlight Air Transport for routine, long-distant transport
- ▶ Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Profession and Training
- ▶ New Collective Bargaining Agreement with Paramedics to improve compensation, benefits, and working environment and culture
- ▶ Investment in Medical Communications Centre Technology to improve deployment plans, locations, and ambulance availability

Opportunities

- ▶ Though emergency response and transport is not authorized, DHW/EHS works regularly with community-based organizations who provide low acuity and routine medical transport for patients in need of help getting to and from medical appointments and facilities.
- ▶ Any entity seeking to provide these services must also be under agreement with the Minister of Health & Wellness or another provincial department's minister (e.g., Minister of Public Works)
- ▶ EHS is happy to explore opportunities to utilize aspects of the planned Woods Harbour service to meet these needs in the community.