



**EMS Chiefs of Canada**  
To Advance and Align EMS Leadership in Canada

## **Campaign and Candidate Questionnaire Canada's 41<sup>st</sup> General Election May 2, 2011**

Paramedics are Canada's first responders in a crisis and the only emergency medical care providers who still make house calls. We serve on the front line of every community across the country – providing essential health care to Canadians when they need it the most.

Paramedics are also the first line of defence for Canadians in emergencies, disasters and pandemics. We are a reliable and constant force in communities across the country; from remote and rural areas to our largest cities.

Canadians also recognize the importance of the work we do. In a recent survey done by Abacus Data, 95% of respondents said they had great or considerable respect for paramedics and 85% viewed us as having an integral role in Canada's health care system.

As part of their commitment to inform members about election issues that matter to them, the Emergency Medical Services Chiefs of Canada (EMSCC) would like you to answer the five questions below. Your answers will go to 30,000 paramedics from coast-to-coast and help shape their decision on Election Day. **If possible, please return the completed questionnaire by Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>.**

- 1. About 40,000 Canadians experience cardiac arrest every year. Defibrillation improves survival rates by up to 30 per cent if delivered in the first few minutes. Making defibrillators easily accessible could save thousands of lives every year. **The EMS Chiefs want the federal government to make automated external defibrillators mandatory in all public buildings. Do you support this call?****
- 2. All Canadians should be able to access emergency services from their handheld wireless devices and providing that access should not be a cost borne by individual consumers. Better user-location information is also essential. In the United States, the Federal Communications Commission mandates that 95% of handsets resolve within 300 metres for network-based tracking and 150 metres for GPS. This information would help paramedics and other emergency responders save lives – especially in rural Canada. **Should the 911 Emergency Access Fees currently charged to Canadians be eliminated and should wireless carriers be required to meet standard criteria for providing user-location services to emergency responders?****

3. The EMS Chiefs applaud the announcement in the recent federal budget that introduced debt forgiveness to physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners will to work in rural and remote parts of Canada. We believe, however, that this policy should be expanded to include Advanced Care Paramedics. ACPs can administer more medication, perform more complex airway management techniques and have a much broader scope of practice. They improve survival rates and are in short supply in many parts of our country. **Do you think debt forgiveness should be extended to Advanced Care Paramedics who are willing to work in rural and remote parts of Canada?**
  
4. Paramedics can and should be used to ease the burden on our primary care system. With appropriate supervision, our health care providers can do routine assessments, post-surgical home care, chronic disease monitoring, public health education, administration of antibiotics and other appropriate primary care functions. This would be a valuable service in rural and remote communities. It would also help address the growing health needs of seniors and other vulnerable populations. **Do you see value in studying the community paramedic model of service as a way of reducing the growing burden on primary care health providers in Canada?**
  
5. Advanced paramedic training is intense, but the amount required to practice in Canada varies from province to province. Currently, in some rural or volunteer community ambulance services, staff may have little more than advanced first-aid. Clearly, it would be in the best interest of Canadians if the level of paramedic service could be standardized across the country. **Would you support the introduction of a national standard of paramedic care in Canada?**

On behalf of Canada's 30,000 paramedics, thank you for your prompt attention to this questionnaire. You can email the completed document to **president@emscc.ca** or send it to **EMS Chiefs of Canada, 201 – 4 Florence Street, Ottawa, Ontario K2P OW7.**

## Emergency Medical Service Chiefs of Canada – Federal Party Platform on EMSCC Issues

### Liberal Party

<p><b>Defibrillators</b></p>	<p>Liberals are committed to working with the provinces and territories on practical and cost-effective steps that improve the health outcomes of Canadians. Strategically placing defibrillators in public areas is a measure that has already saved many lives, and we would be open to consultations on this matter for federal buildings.</p>
<p><b>911 Access Fees</b></p>	<p>A Liberal government will commit to narrowing the gap between rural and urban Canada. A Liberal government will set a goal of 100 percent high-speed internet connectivity of at least 1.5 MB/sec for all Canadian communities within three years of being elected. This commitment will increase the availability of affordable line and wireless connectivity, and <b>improve mobile phone coverage in rural areas</b>. A Liberal government would examine further the issue of standardizing criteria for providing user-location services to emergency responders.</p>
<p><b>Rural ACP Debt Forgiveness</b></p>	<p>Liberals are committed to bringing Canadians together by narrowing the gap between rural and urban Canada, including by supporting rural health services. We are open to the idea of extending debt forgiveness to Advanced Care Paramedics, as other medical professionals are also needed in rural areas. More work needs to be done in this area and a Liberal government would examine this issue.</p> <p>In cooperation with provinces and territories, a Liberal government will introduce a new incentive by forgiving a portion of Canada Student Loans for doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners choosing to practice in a designated underserved small-town or rural community. Family doctors will be eligible for student loan forgiveness up to \$8,000 per year to a maximum of \$40,000. Nurses and nurse practitioners will be eligible for student loan forgiveness up \$4,000 per year to a maximum of \$20,000.</p> <p>Quebec does not participate in the Canada Student Loans Program, therefore a Liberal government will work with the government of Quebec to determine the best ways to meet the objectives.</p> <p>A Liberal government will invest an additional \$40 million over two years to improve rural health services in cooperation with provinces, territories, municipalities and medical professionals. Liberals are committed to bringing Canadians together by narrowing the gap between rural and</p>

	<p>urban Canada, including by supporting rural health services. We are open to the idea of extending debt forgiveness to Advanced Care Paramedics, as other medical professionals are also needed in rural areas. More work needs to be done in this area and a Liberal government would examine this issue.</p> <p>In cooperation with provinces and territories, a Liberal government will introduce a new incentive by forgiving a portion of Canada Student Loans for doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners choosing to practice in a designated underserved small-town or rural community. Family doctors will be eligible for student loan forgiveness up to \$8,000 per year to a maximum of \$40,000. Nurses and nurse practitioners will be eligible for student loan forgiveness up \$4,000 per year to a maximum of \$20,000.</p> <p>Quebec does not participate in the Canada Student Loans Program, therefore a Liberal government will work with the government of Quebec to determine the best ways to meet the objectives.</p> <p>A Liberal government will invest an additional \$40 million over two years to improve rural health services in cooperation with provinces, territories, municipalities and medical professionals.</p>
<b>Community Paramedicine</b>	<p>Yes. Provinces are working individually to address concerns about service quality and safety in healthcare delivery. But successful innovations in management and service delivery are too often confined to one location. The work of bodies set up at the national and provincial levels to foster quality improvement in a wide range of specific services has not been fully exploited nationally.</p> <p>Identifying and adopting the most effective and efficient delivery methods from other jurisdictions – when undertaken broadly and systematically – can reduce costs while improving the quality of care.</p> <p>The federal government is well placed to energize a Canadian effort to put quality improvement, best practices and innovation at the forefront. This has to be a national effort, and a Liberal government will make it a priority again. The federal government has established valuable instruments, including the Canadian Institutes of Health Information, the Canadian Patient Safety Institute, the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and Canada Health Infoway serving all jurisdictions.</p>
<b>National Standard of Paramedic Care</b>	<p>As noted above, a Liberal government would work with the provinces and territories to improve the quality and safety of healthcare for all Canadians. We would be open to consulting on the</p>

	merits of a national standard of paramedic care in Canada.
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### **New Democratic Party**

<b>Defibrillators</b>	Having early access to defibrillation during a heart attack can improve one's chances of survival. New Democrat government would be in-favour of initiating a plan to install defibrillators in public buildings.
<b>911 Access Fees</b>	A New Democrat government will rescind the 2006 Conservative industry-oriented directive to the CRTC and direct the regulator to stand up for the public interest, not just the major telecommunications companies. It would be in the public interest to remove these fees and to provide user location standards.
<b>Rural ACP Debt Forgiveness</b>	In addition to substantially increasing the number of training spaces for other health professionals beyond additional 1,200 doctors and 6,000 nurses, an NDP government will work in collaboration with the provinces and territories to establish programs aimed at recruiting and supporting low-income, rural and aboriginal medical students. Debt forgiveness to Advanced-Care Paramedics could be part of these programs.
<b>Community Paramedicine</b>	New Democrats are in favour of improving Canada's health care system as long as the principle universal access without user fee is respected. An NDP government would be open to discussing the Community Paramedic Model with representatives of the Emergency Medical Service Chiefs of Canada.
<b>National Standard of Paramedic Care</b>	A New Democratic government would be open to improving the level of paramedic care in Canada.

## Green Party

<b>Defibrillators</b>	The Green Party realizes that cardiac arrest is a significant killer of Canadians and that AEDs carry an enormous potential to save thousands of lives each year. We further understand that, although these devices are already in place in many settings (e.g. schools and hockey arenas), Canadians currently do not have equal access to them. Regulation among the provinces aimed at ensuring equal access by making AEDs mandatory in legally defined "public buildings" is also uneven. The Green Party supports efforts currently underway to pass provincial legislation similar to Bill 41 <i>Defibrillation Access Act</i> , and would consider sponsoring or supporting federal legislation aimed at guaranteeing equal access for all Canadians regardless of where they live.
<b>911 Access Fees</b>	Yes. We believe no Canadian under any circumstance should be charged for calling 911 to obtain emergency assistance. We will also support a new CRTC regulation similar to that mandated by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission.
<b>Rural ACP Debt Forgiveness</b>	Yes. A Green Government will provide student loan forgiveness incentives for graduating doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health care professionals who agree to staff rural facilities and family practice clinics where recruitment is currently a problem.
<b>Community Paramedicine</b>	We believe that the health care team, centered on the patient, includes a large number of trained professionals. We can do more to make efficient use of nurse-practitioners, as well as other health professionals such as paramedics to help reduce the burden on primary health providers.
<b>National Standard of Paramedic Care</b>	Yes, the Green Party of Canada supports the idea of creating a national standard of paramedic care in Canada.

### Conservative Party

<b>Defibrillators</b>	<p>There's nothing more Canadian than a hockey game at the local arena. It's a great way to build friendships and communities, and it's part of an active, healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>To help protect players, both adults and children, many communities and local hockey associations have purchased defibrillators for their local arenas. Experience shows that these investments can save lives. In partnership with interested stakeholders, we will ensure that every recreational hockey arena in Canada has a defibrillator, and we will support training for attendants in using them.</p> <p>This promise underlines the importance of informing politicians about issues that matter to us and the people we serve. I encourage all of you to press your local candidates on defibrillators and the other issues mentioned in our recent questionnaire.</p> <p>The EMSCC and our Government Relations Committee are working hard on these issues. We will continue to keep you informed of relevant policy announcement and answers to our questionnaire, as they become available.</p>
<b>911 Access Fees</b>	No Response
<b>Rural ACP Debt Forgiveness</b>	No Response
<b>Community Paramedicine</b>	No Response
<b>National Standard of Paramedic Care</b>	No Response