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March 28, 2017

Attention: All Members  
CUPE Local 873

Dear Members;

## **Re: Campaign Launch**

The Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC are a dynamic organization of professionals. On behalf of those we are privileged to serve, we strive to foster a culture of delivering the highest quality of paramedicine and emergency dispatching. We advocate for improved working conditions, health and economic status for our membership, while striving to be an integral part of the solution to British Columbia's evolving Public safety and healthcare challenges.

In line with our strategic plan and direction by our membership, we have been working hard on putting together a new public relations campaign. It's with great enthusiasm and excitement that we announce the launching of our Public relations campaign designed to raise awareness, of who we are and the essential service we provide. The campaign shows our stakeholders that we the Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC are the front line medical professionals that they should have within 8 minutes and 59 seconds in a medical emergency. The campaign also raises awareness that we are in need of more Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers.

### **Our goal**

While we acknowledge and appreciate the recent funding announcement made by the Provincial Government, we know that there is a lot more work to be done. As the most highly trained, frontline medical professionals, we deserve further government support and adequate funding for required resources. These resources are critical to ensuring our workloads return to a reasonable level, which means less paramedic and dispatcher fatigue and better patient care.

### **The campaign**

The campaign is launching today, Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and includes TV advertising, print advertising, media coverage in Metro newspaper, social media ads, and two new websites. The websites include:

1. [www.moreparamedics.com](http://www.moreparamedics.com): Here visitors are educated on the important role paramedics play here in BC and why paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers need public support and more resources. This website will also be a valuable resource where our ads will live online and visitors can access the list of MLAs to contact, requesting support for paramedics.

2. [www.paramedicsin859.com](http://www.paramedicsin859.com): Here, paramedics, dispatchers and visitors will be able to report their ambulance response times. Reported response times will give the public, politicians, patients, and of course, Paramedics and Dispatchers, a visual of average response times. We have been notified by many Paramedics and Dispatchers of the long response times to get to a patient's side during a medical emergency. This is your opportunity to be involved in the campaign by reporting your response times, no matter where you work in the province. We encourage you to visit our website and report any responses to a patient's side that are greater than 8 minutes and 59 seconds. Simply visit the site and follow the prompts.

**Please note**, that we have taken measures in the construction and implementation of this website to ensure that the reporting of delayed response times, will not reveal a patient's location, in order to maintain privacy and patient confidentiality. When you click a location on the map, the exact location is converted to a general spot within the electoral boundary, and thus the actual point you clicked is not saved or revealed.

#### **What this means for you**

You will likely see our ads running over the next few months on TV and in print. To ensure we are all able to support this initiative to raise awareness and public support of our cause, we have attached a message box here that outlines our key messaging for this campaign.

This campaign is an opportunity to emphasize to the public that while we as a collective are the most highly trained, frontline medical professionals, we do not have enough ambulances and resources to provide emergency care to B.C. residents who need it. We encourage you to share, re-post and retweet our social media posts covering the campaign.

You will be seeing more communications with ways you can help support and spread awareness surrounding the campaign over the next few weeks.

Sincerely,

Provincial Executive Committee  
Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC  
CUPE Local 873

BB/sw/MoveUp



## UPDATE ON OPIOID CRISIS IN BC

The opioid crisis is not going away – the ambulance service relies on the continual support from public and the government

There were [102](#) suspected drug overdose deaths in Feb 2017. This is a 72.9% increase over the number of death occurring in Feb 2016

In 2016, paramedics responded to 19,275 overdose calls alone. Every times an ambulance is called to a fentanyl overdose emergency wait times increase. The workload placed on paramedics is huge.

A report released on March 21st, 2017 by the City of Vancouver found that overdose deaths in Vancouver are likely to surpass February totals.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Over the past 10 years, the demand for more paramedics has increased but resources for them have not.

The B.C. government issued a report on Metro B.C. (Vancouver and Victoria) regarding paramedics and resources. Rural and remote locations in B.C. were left out.

Recruiting and retaining workers in rural locations is challenging due to lack of funding for permanent part-time workers.

The workload placed on paramedics is huge. It's not uncommon for paramedics to work 16 hours straight because of a staffing shortage.

These men and women are tackling a grueling cycle of being overworked and burnt out due to lack of funds for more resources.

## THOUGHTS ON RECENT FUNDING

The Ministry of Health recently announced \$91.4 million in additional funding for emergency health services over the next three years.

While this is good news for our members, the opioid crisis is not going away and we need continual support from the government to support BC residents.

Citizens need to know that we are short resources, and the resources that we do have are not being successfully used. Citizens are the ones at risk.

If BC Ambulance Services state no difference in response times, our stance is: There is a grave disconnect between what BC Ambulance service is telling the public and what we know from our work on the ground in the field.

## OUR CAMPAIGN AND 8:59

We need to support BC Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers who are on the front lines of the opioid crisis and most health emergencies.

Currently, the national average wait time goal for paramedics is 8:59. In the province of British Columbia, this goal is only being met 30% of the time.

Since the 70's, a consensus standard response time of 8 minutes and 59 seconds became recognized by Emergency Medical Service (EMS) as after this time the likelihood of a patient having a "shockable" rhythm to survive declined by 8%.

In 2016, BC Emergency Health Services released an Action Plan to establish 8:59 as a realistic response time target for greatest success during life-threatening calls.

The Ambulance Paramedics of BC have developed a series of advertisements that shine a light on the impact of communities when paramedic's resources are not met.

While these ads may be challenging to watch, these are the scenarios paramedics face day in and day out.

In order to properly service the residents of B.C., APBC need more support and resources.

