

The Department of Health and Wellness is moving forward to establish the College of Paramedics in partnership with the College of Paramedic Advisory Committee. In December 2015, the province passed the Paramedics Act to establish the self-regulation of paramedics under a new College of Paramedics. The Act will come into effect on April 1, 2017.

The College of Paramedics will set standards of practice and paramedics will be better able to provide care as part of collaborative inter-professional teams. It will give paramedics a stronger voice in a unified provincial health care system. The College will also be responsible for receiving and addressing matters of concern from the public, this will lead to increased public safety for Nova Scotians.

When the Act becomes effective, all paramedics who wish to work in Nova Scotia must be licensed by the College. To become a licensed paramedic under the new College, the Act requires that you be registered in good standing with Emergency Health Services until March 31, 2017.

In order to work as a paramedic in Nova Scotia after April 1, 2017 you must:

- complete the licensing form
- pay the licensing fee,
- have professional liability insurance, and
- work within a medical oversight model (as is the case now).

We understand you may have questions about what this means for you as a paramedic and we are committed to keeping you informed throughout the process as updates become available.

Since our last communication with you in August 2016, when we issued a call for new members of the College of Paramedics Advisory Committee, we now have 30 members. The committee is holding regular meetings to work on the transition plan for paramedics to become licensed under the new College of Paramedics.

We also issued an expression of interest for paramedics who wished to be considered for the initial Council of the College of Paramedics. We thank everyone who put forward an application. We will have more information about the upcoming council appointments in early 2017.

We are also sharing with you more information below to address the most common questions about licensing, professional liability and medical oversight.

If you need additional information or have other questions please contact Bud Avery, Manager, Paramedic Regulatory Affairs, Emergency Health Services bud.avery@novascotia.ca

Licensing Forms and Fee

Q. What will I need to do to become licensed to practice as a paramedic on April 1, 2017?

To become a licensed paramedic in Nova Scotia you must be a registered paramedic in good standing with Emergency Health Services as of March 3, 2017. You will also be required to pay a licensing fee.

Q. How will registration work?

The registration process will be similar to the current registration process that exists with Emergency Health Services. You will be able to complete the licensing form and pay the fee online.

Registration is scheduled to open March 1, 2017. Additional details on when and where to register will be sent in February.

Q. How much will the licensing fee be?

The exact cost of the registration will be decided in February 2017. We anticipate the licensing fee will be between \$400.00 and \$470.00.

Q. What payment options will I have?

You will be able to pay your licensing fee online using a credit card. More details about payment will be available in February. When the College of Paramedics is in place, it will be working on payroll deduction options for the 2018 licensing year.

Professional Liability Insurance

Q. What professional liability coverage is needed?

All paramedics who wish to work in Nova Scotia will be required to have professional liability coverage. The amount of coverage required will be \$5 million per occurrence and \$5 million coverage per policy year, excluding legal or court costs.

Q. What if I work for the Nova Scotia Health Authority or Emergency Medical Services?

If you work for the Nova Scotia Health Authority or Emergency Medical Services, you have professional liability coverage through your employer while you are on the job. You will not need to purchase additional insurance unless you wish to do so.

Q. What if I don't work for the Nova Scotia Health Authority or Emergency Medical Services?

If you work for another employer, you should speak with your employer to see if its insurance plan covers you for professional liability. You may need to purchase professional liability insurance if you are not covered by your employers' plan.

More information about professional liability insurance costs and coverage is available from the Paramedics Association of Canada www.paramedic.ca

Q. Why do I need professional liability insurance?

Professional liability insurance provides financial protection (also known as professional liability protection) for health care providers in the event a patient files a negligence or malpractice lawsuit.

Medical Oversight Model

Q. What do I have to do to ensure my employer has a medical oversight model in place?

Under the current Emergency Health Services system, paramedics work under a medical oversight model. Employers are aware of the current requirement and have been advised that this will continue to be a requirement under the Paramedics Act.

If you are employed by the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Emergency Health Services or Praxis, the College of Paramedics will have the necessary information about medical oversight physicians for these employers.

If you work for another employer, you will need to provide the name of the physician who is providing medical oversight for your employer. You will provide this information at the time you complete your online licensing form.