

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REQUEST FOR REVISIONS TO *PARAMEDICS ACT AND REGULATIONS* SUBMISSION TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS

DECEMBER 18, 2020

SUBMITTED BY:
COLLEGE OF PARAMEDICS OF NOVA SCOTIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

As one of the newest self-regulated professions in Nova Scotia, the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia (the College) has fully embraced its mission: *“To protect the public and ensure public and member confidence by effectively regulating the paramedic profession.”*

In its first three years of operation, the College has been navigating the use of its legislation, with the assistance of Legal Counsel, to screen applicants for registration and licensing and manage professional conduct processes around complaints and fitness to practice concerns.

Through its values of *compassion, integrity, innovation, accountability, and fairness*, it has been striving to effectively carry out its mandate according to Section 4(10) of the *Paramedics Act* to: *“Serve and protect the public interest in the practice of paramedicine; preserve the integrity of the paramedic profession; and maintain public and member confidence in the ability of the profession to regulate the practice of paramedicine.”*

Challenges

The current *Paramedics Act*, SNS 2015, c 33 (“the Act”) was passed in 2015 and proclaimed in force on April 1, 2017. The process undertaken for the development of the content of the Act is somewhat unclear, as the Act appears to contain extracts from a number of professional self-regulation statutes in effect at that time. Some of the statutes that may have formed the precedents for the Act have since been significantly amended.

As the College has continued to mature and evolve, those who currently administer the Act, including the Council of the College, Committees, the Registrar, and staff, have found a number of issues that are creating difficulties in its implementation.

Unfortunately, the issues have resulted in additional legal costs for the College, as well as delays in the decision-making process associated with the College’s registration, licensure, complaints processes and the College’s ability to issue substantially equivalent licenses to any labour mobility or international applicants.

Solution

Recognizing that there was a need to propose amendments to the *Paramedics Act and Regulations*, the College prepared and provided a detailed submission to Government dated May 20, 2020. Then following that, the Council approved a significant expenditure to involve a consulting firm to lead the engagement with stakeholders.

Understanding that proper engagement would enable better planning for sounder outcomes, the College engaged the independent consulting firm, Barefoot Facilitation Inc. (Barefoot), to design, develop and facilitate the proposed consultation strategy, as outlined in the College's planned phased approach, and provide summary reports on the consultation.

Between May 1st and September 3rd, 2020, the College implemented a consultation plan for the purpose of soliciting stakeholder feedback and to measure their level of support regarding proposed amendments to the *Paramedics Act and Regulations* for the purpose of guiding the College's discussions with the Nova Scotia Government.

The College sought broad stakeholder engagement during the consultation process, in order to ensure that the proposed amendments were consistent with the Nova Scotia policy direction for health profession self-regulation, as well as being supported by various stakeholders.

The College engaged a number of stakeholder groups, which are further elaborated upon in *Appendix A – Legislative Consultation Feedback Report on Proposed Amendments to the Paramedics Act and Regulations* December 18, 2020 on page(s) 4 to 5, including:

Health Care Regulators in Nova Scotia Associations	Unions
Paramedic Educational Institutions	Employers
Canadian Jurisdictions with Paramedic Self-Regulation	Emergency Medicine Physicians
	Members of the Public
	Members of the College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia

Six (6) of the stakeholder groups attended virtual engagement sessions, where they received an overview of the proposed amendments and had the opportunity to engage with the consultant and College staff prior to completing an online survey. The remaining three (3) stakeholder groups were provided with the background document and online survey.

Data was collected from individual stakeholders utilizing a customized online survey (N=158). A key informant interview was conducted with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the College of Nursing opted to provide an electronic submission.

The initial one on one virtual engagement sessions conducted with Emergency Health Services Nova Scotia and the Emergency Medicine Physicians, resulted in additional discussions that further informed the CPNS's proposed amendments.

Highlights

Overall, a vast majority of stakeholders consistently indicated strong support for the proposed amendments to the *Paramedics Act*, noting:

- **96%** of survey participants indicated “strongly favour”, “somewhat favour” or “neutral” regarding their support **of the proposed amendments to the *Paramedics Act***.
- **98%** of survey participants indicated “strongly favour”, “somewhat favour” or “neutral” in relation to the statement **“proposed changes would ensure public interest is the top priority for the College of Paramedics”**.
- **98%** of survey participants indicated “strongly favour”, “somewhat favour” or “neutral” for the statement that the **“proposed changes would enable the College of Paramedics to remain current, relevant and nimble”**.
- While there were some conflicting views on accountability, most **(95%)** of survey participants were somewhat, strongly in favour or neutral to the statement that the **“proposed changes would demonstrate the College of Paramedics goal of being accountable to registrants and the public”**.
- **99%** of survey participants indicated “strongly favour”, “somewhat favour” or neutral for the **“proposed changes would demonstrate the College of Paramedics commitment to accountability”**.

When reviewing the level of support for all the key concepts, one recognizes that for the vast majority of the key concepts the level of support, which was defined as “strongly support”, “somewhat support” or “neutral”, was ninety-five (95%) or higher. The only value lower than ninety percent (90%) was eighty-nine percent (89%) for the concept associated with the Board’s proposed composition.

Positive feedback was received from all stakeholder types and they were grateful for the opportunity to participate. There was general agreement that the proposed changes make sense, are headed in the right direction, and provide flexibility for the College to adapt to an evolving health system and profession. The amount of effort to develop these proposed changes was appreciated.

Whenever some of the proposed amendments raised concerns from stakeholders, and when those concerns were not consistent with best practices in regulation or were inconsistent with the College’s mandate to protect the public, the College has attempted to address them in Appendix A – Legislative Feedback Report on the Proposed Amendments to the *Paramedics Act and Regulations*, December 18, 2020, and will seek future opportunities to educate stakeholders.

However, there was one area that required further consultation regarding a few concepts where the College felt it prudent to further engage stakeholders. Those concepts revolved around:

- Revising the definition of the practice of paramedicine and removing the requirement for direct or indirect supervision.
- The proposed definition for the practice of paramedicine
- Adding the Authority that permits expanded scope of practice for individual paramedics where they have successfully completed such education as approved by the Board.

The College took extra measures to hold individual meetings with these stakeholders for the purposes of better understanding their concerns. As a result of that dialogue, the College developed additional proposed amendments and shared them with those stakeholders. No further feedback has been received by the College.

As a result of the concerns raised by EHS Nova Scotia and the Emergency Medicine Physicians, the College is recommending a change in the previous submitted definition of the Practice of Paramedicine, as well as the addition of other definitions to add further clarity to the definition of the Practice of Paramedicine. This information is detailed in the attached *Appendix A – Legislative Consultation Feedback Report on Proposed Amendments to the Paramedics Act and Regulations* December 18, 2020

Next Steps

The College appreciates the time and attention of all those who participated in the consultation process. The feedback provided has helped to inform the direction and development of the proposed amendments, such that changes were made to some of the initial proposed amendments and additional amendments have been proposed.

Accordingly, the College is looking to advance its request for revisions to the *Paramedics Act and Regulations* based upon the information detailed in the attached *Appendix A – Legislative Consultation Feedback Report on Proposed Amendments to the Paramedics Act and Regulations* December 18, 2020

The College looks forward to its ongoing discussions with Government regarding the proposed amendments in anticipation that they may be introduced in the spring of 2021.