

A fresh look at the National Occupational Competency Profile for Paramedics

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The Paramedic Association of Canada (PAC), and the Alberta College of Paramedics (College), convened a meeting on July 19 and 20, 2013, to look at the renewal of the National Occupational Competency Profile (NOCP) for Paramedics. There was broad stakeholder representation from educators, paramedics, regulators, operational managers and clinical practice leaders. There were 18 representatives from the Maritimes, Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.

The meeting was held in Sherwood Park, Alberta at the College's office. The meeting was hosted by Sheldon Thunstrom and Tim Essington (the College's President and Registrar/Executive Director respectively), and by Chris Hood and me (PAC's President and Executive Director respectively). The PAC has entered into a collaborative relationship with the College, recognizing many shared interests including a commitment to the renewal of the NOCP. The College has expressed their intention to migrate to the NOCP, as the existing Alberta Occupational Competency Profile is significantly outdated and does not accurately reflect current and emerging paramedic practice.

Both PAC and the College recognize that a primary stakeholder group to be involved in redesign of the NOCP is the educational sector, led by the Society of Prehospital Educators of Canada. Further, PAC believes that a comprehensive review requires a broad stakeholder participation which includes some if not all of the following groups:

- Paramedic Chiefs of Canada.
- Regulators, particularly dealing with the "national examination."
- The Canadian Organization of Paramedic Regulators.
- Educational accreditation organizations, beginning with the Canadian Medical Association.
- Employers, including the Canadian Forces.
- Physicians and medical directors, nurses, respiratory therapists and other regulated health professionals with an interest in paramedicine.
- Government, legislators, and policy makers.

The meeting was the first step: bringing interested parties to scope out the work ahead. We reviewed the strength and weaknesses of the current NOCP and came to a draft agreement on purpose for the renewed NOCP: "The range of professional abilities that define paramedic practice in Canada." The statement does not appear like much, but it is a significant accomplishment in that we were able to find consensus on a foundational piece for future deliberations.

The meeting was a success because the participants all expressed their commitment to a collaborative model in the renewal of the National Occupational Competency Profile for Paramedics. Further information will follow as the PAC and the College develop a project charter to define the NOCP work over the coming years.