



PROFESSIONAL PARAMEDIC ASSOCIATION OF OTTAWA
L'ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONNELLE DES PARAMÉDICS D'OTTAWA
 a proud chapter of the Ontario Paramedic Association

OttawaParamedics.ca

The ghosts of Paramedicine 2005

In September, 2005, Ottawa played host to the Paramedicine 2005 conference at the Marriot Hotel. This year, the annual OPA event was coordinated by nine extremely dedicated volunteers from the Ottawa Paramedic Service, who put together a sold-out conference. Over 300 people attended this year's event, which showcased 16 guest speakers, 40 exhibitors and 11 paramedic units from across Canada and North America.

Throughout the three-day weekend, attendees were able to attend a wide variety of CMEs in both of Canada's official languages. Paramedics, nurses, physicians and police officers captivated their audiences with original, informative sessions. Dr. Louise McNaughton enlightened her audience with a presentation on how the real life version of crime scene investigation works, while Canadian Helicopters gave a riveting lecture on extrication techniques in difficult circumstances. Paramedics from different parts of the world lectured on what it was like to be on scene during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and after the tsunami. Video documentation by the paramedics involved gave the audience an even greater appreciation of what these experiences were like.

Complete with musical entertainment, the Ottawa Paramedic Service Honour Guard, and local television personality James Hendricks as Master of Ceremonies, an awards banquet celebrated various achievements of paramedics, doctors, community members, local councillors and media. This three hour ceremony involved presentations for Long Service, Exemplary Service, OPA and PPAO

appreciation awards, and the OPA Award of Valour. Local MPP Richard Patten was in attendance to present Base Hospital physician Dr. Justin Maloney with the PPAO Chain of Survival Award of Excellence for his 10 years of commitment to the Chain of Survival and patient care. Ottawa Sun reporter Tobi Cohen and A-Channel News Anchor Tony Grace were presented with the OPA Media Award for their work on various stories involving paramedicine.

Other notable personalities in attendance included Ottawa Councilor Diane Deans, an active paramedic supporter, Deputy City Manager Steve Kanellakos, CTV Ottawa's Max Keeping, Dr. Chris Mazza, the Canadian Military, Ottawa Mayor Bob Chiarelli, and various Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of several paramedic services.

One of the most moving parts of the evening was when civilian Marianne Cuhaci was reunited with the paramedics who had resuscitated her after she went VSA while driving her car. Ms. Cuhaci gave a fantastic speech detailing the impact paramedics had on the lives of herself and her family.

The entire weekend drew high praise from everyone in attendance. For those who donated their time to coordinate this conference, the weekend went by in the blink of an eye. It almost makes you sit back and wonder ... we just worked our butts off for a year to produce that? Those of you who have planned a wedding probably know what that feels like—months of hard work and then it's all done in a matter of hours.

To give you an idea of just how massive and successful this weekend was here are some numbers ...

- Local charity groups received over \$6,000 dollars in donated funds
- Over \$65,000 of revenue was generated in three days
- Over \$60,000 in expenses were generated
- 51 volunteers from Ottawa Paramedic Service and local colleges donated more than 3,000 man hours of time to coordinate this weekend

In closing, a special thank you goes out to Phyllis Mullin for her work in coordinating several great banquet presenters and attendees. Finally, to the nine conference executives who spent over a year of extremely hard work pulling this conference off—Elizabeth Anderson, Mike Cross, Scott Stephens, Annie Gregoire, Andrew Gleeson, Anne-Marie Piché, Matthew Hogan, Greg Furlong and Darryl Wilton (the ever so resourceful president who hired buskers to be the banquet musicians), an enormous thank you. Without you, and Elaine Irwin (OPA) tying together the last minute loose ends, this conference would not have been the smoothly run, extremely successful conference that it was.

Although the conference was closed in September, we are still in the process of collecting payments from exhibitors and finalizing our financial report. I guess you could say that the conference is still haunting us!

If you'd like to see pictures of the P2005 conference weekend visit the photo section of www.ottawaparamedics.ca

Thanks for coming out!





You Gotta Surf!

I'm sure many of you have had a chance to visit the PPAO website at OttawaParamedics.ca but perhaps you haven't realized what a great asset and source of information this site is.

One of the most popular features for paid members is use of the Shift Exchanger. How many times have you wanted a day off but using vacation time wasn't an option? Paramedics on opposite platoons rarely see each other and there isn't a notice board at headquarters to post notices for shift swaps. Using the shift exchanger can be a tool of great assistance in finding someone to switch with. Last year almost 400 shifts were exchanged through use of the website. It's relatively easy to do—you can browse currently posted shifts and reply to the medic who posted it, or post your own. Just fill out your name, contact info, the shift you want to switch, click "Enter" and it's posted for our 300 members to see. The shift exchanger is highly interactive and will allow you to e-mail or page anyone with an advertised shift. Getting a day off work just got easier.

The website also provides an event calendar for quick reference and a platoon calendar while the photo gallery displays pictures of several paramedic events. The "Think Tank" allows members to read and post opinions, news articles, ideas and suggestions. There is a section on current PPAO events, future endeavours, buying PPAO merchandise and links to several paramedic related websites.

The most important feature of the PPAO website is that it provides an extremely detailed and thorough source of information for all paramedics. The PPAO Board of Directors works diligently to provide daily updates on any information that is pertinent to our job. Any media releases from television, newspapers and other media sources worldwide are posted on the website. How much do you know about Bill 206 or inclusion of paramedics as a Public Safety Occupation? Reading the articles and information on the website will provide you with everything you need to know about these and many other topics.

If you want to be kept up to date on the progress paramedics are making and be knowledgeable about your future, OttawaParamedics.ca is the place to explore. We definitely have the most advanced paramedic website in North America and we are very proud of it!



Just Do It

Since its formation three years ago, one of the main goals of the PPAO has been promoting the profession of Paramedicine. Think back just two or three years ago—how many times did you read a newspaper article or see a TV news report on "ambulance drivers" or "EMTs" or "emergency workers"? The word "paramedic" was rarely used by the media. In Ottawa today, thanks largely in part to the public education provided by the PPAO, the word "paramedic" is dominant, and very infrequently are we referred to by any other name. Media, city councilors and the community are now much more knowledgeable about the paramedic scope of practice, the equipment we use and the effects we have on those we treat. This hit home at Paramedicine 2005 when paramedics from across Canada couldn't believe how educated our local politicians, media and community were about our profession. We have definitely built ourselves a good reputation here in Ottawa.

Building such a strong foundation for paramedics involves two main components—communication and finances. The communication aspect has been steadily increasing but the financial aspect has encountered a few roadblocks. Without financial support, an association is limited in the progress it can make. Aiming to continually build on the foundation already created, the PPAO has worked extremely hard to regain the financial support we once had. Over the past nine months, Darryl Wilton and Rob Mallett have worked assiduously to create a Pre-Authorized Debit system for PPAO members.

Looking from the outside in, this may seem like an insignificant task but let me put it in perspective. The Pre-Authorized Debit system is currently used only by large corporations such as Bell, Rogers, insurance companies and mutual fund providers. These corporations involve thousands of employees and process hundreds of millions of dollars worth of transactions every year. To have two volunteers set up a system like this for 300 people is a massive undertaking and exemplary accomplishment. Now that the new debit system is in place and working well, the PPAO can again focus on promoting the profession of paramedicine through education in the community.

The year 2006 will bring several new projects into existence. A mobile exhibit is being created to be displayed in local shopping malls while a permanent showcase is being designed for the new headquarters. Funded completely by corporate sponsors, this glass and wood showcase will display PPAO merchandise, paramedic awards and contain a multimedia station, complete with LCD TV. We also plan to complete our bilingual website by the end of 2006.

One of the bigger projects on the horizon involves further education in the health care field. Health clinics, ER staff, nursing homes and other health care systems will be educated about who paramedics are, our scope of practice, our types of equipment and why "ambulance driver" needs to be replaced with "paramedic." The goal by the end of the year is to change the old ER announcement from "nurse to ambulance triage" to "nurse to paramedic triage."

The PPAO has made a great deal of progress since its inception only a few years ago and has every intention to continue working for its members and advancing the profession through education and awareness.

