

PROFESSIONAL PARAMEDIC ASSOCIATION OF OTTAWA



Newsletter

SUMMER 2005

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS CANCELLED

Darryl Wilton, President

Payroll deductions are a great invention!

This automatic process would definitely help any organization or club to ensure their longevity. There are many reasons why your executive spent 16 months lobbying for payroll deductions. In fact, the City of Ottawa currently provides this service for more than two dozen groups who also depend on payroll deductions.

Just when things were going great, something had to happen...

About 6 months ago, the PPAO learned that CUPE503 filed an Unfair Labour Practice Charge through the Ontario Labour Relations Board. On Friday June 24 at 13:08hrs, the PPAO received a phone call advising us that as a result of CUPE's charge, the Ontario Labour Relations Board ordered the City of Ottawa to shut down PPAO payroll deductions. In case you haven't noticed, biweekly PPAO payroll deductions are no longer being deducted from your cheque as of mid July.

We got off lucky as CUPE was gunning for much more than the PPAO payroll deductions. It was reported that CUPE503 demanded that the City of Ottawa remove all communications mechanisms (i.e. pagers, bulletin boards, newsletters, CME presentations, posters, mailboxes, website access, email, etc) vital to the PPAO. Lucky for us, these items will remain in place for the time being.

I know its hard, but try to look at the cup as half full...

Paramedics should remember that if the PPAO was just an ineffective coffee club, other groups would have absolutely no interest in shutting us down. The fact that an initiative of this magnitude was undertaken should be regarded as an accolade to every paramedic who came forward to commit \$5 per pay in order to have our professional voice heard loud and clear in the community.

It is actually kind of funny, because in the grand scheme of things, when you compare the \$5 PPAO dues to other deductions that get taken off your cheque every 2 weeks, that \$5 begins to look more and more like not much at all. In fact, the total sum of money we collect from all of the paramedics, in an entire year doesn't add up to much and doesn't award the PPAO a lot of flexibility either. But we manage to make due with what we have. One can only wonder why CUPE put so much time and money into stopping this meager \$5 from coming off your cheque?

We do have a contingency plan. The PPAO will prevail. Keep reading...

LOOKING BACK....

Scott Stephens, Vice-President

I remember back two years ago when Doug Ryan had talked about getting the old Ottawa Paramedic Association going again. Over the summer of 2003 the original group had numerous meetings to start building what has become the Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa. Who would have thought at that time it would blossom into what it is today, one of the strongest local chapters of the Ontario Paramedic Association across Ontario.

Today the board and all its volunteers are feverishly preparing for the honour of hosting Paramedicine 2005 this fall for the first time in Ottawa. This event is promising to be the premier Paramedic conference in Canada this year. With numerous special guest speakers, events, vendors and sponsors this is sure to be an event you won't want to miss.

OTTAWA CANADA Paramedicine 2005

CONFERENCE PREPARATION - OUCH!

Darryl Wilton, President

As many of you know, the PPAO is coordinating, hosting and organizing the Ontario Paramedic Associations premiere educational conference and exposition at the luxurious Marriott Hotel in downtown Ottawa. This conference is being called Paramedicine 2005 and it is scheduled to run from September 16-18, 2005.

The Paramedicine 2005 Conference Committee has logged thousands and thousands of volunteer hours in an effort to make this years conference a resounding success.

We are proud to announce that Mike Cross and Scott Stephens booked some phenomenal physicians and guest speakers for our WORLD CLASS CME's including a paramedic from the Tsunami Relief Effort and an EMT who was on scene at the 9-11 Pentagon Attack. Greg Furlong and Matthew Hogan booked awesome vendors displays from all over the world including an interactive driving simulator and even AMPDS mapping technology.

It also took months to create the graphic design and bilingual marketing templates which consist of posters, brochures, post cards, registration forms and other products. Jean-Francois Cimon did all of the translation for P2005 and this was well received by our

comrades in Prescott-Russell, Sudbury, Kuskuskasing and Québec. Annie Gregoire also learned to program very powerful databases that could run stats and allow us to market to every OPA member, OPA chapter, paramedic service, base hospital, medical school, college paramedic program and even our comrades in Quebec.

We are proud to show you some pictures of your P2005 committee putting together 7500 packages for distribution across Ontario and Quebec. This project took days and the guys at Canada Post looked like they almost had CVA's when we came through the door with all of the boxes and envelopes that needed to be weighed and stamped!

Please check out our website at www.OttawaParamedics.ca for more detailed information about the P2005 conference. We booked the entire conference floor, so we are sure it will be a blast! If you haven't gone to a paramedic conference before, ask someone who has or take a look at the photos of P2003 and P2004 on our website.

Paramedicine conferences provide an absolutely amazing experience! In order to get the full effect, you gotta stay at the hotel! We can't print more than that :)



PROUD TO BE PART OF IT ALL

Darryl Wilton, President

Just 2 years ago, the paramedics in Ottawa had no collective or organized voice. When the PPAO started out, it was all about finally saying what needed to be said. We brought together paramedics who were determined to enhance the profession at any cost. The journey has been very difficult. After all, none of us had done anything of this magnitude before but I would say that for a bunch of volunteers, I am pretty proud of our accomplishments.

It is important to remember our impressive journey...

Since our inception, we have been involved with very successful lobbying at the local, provincial and national levels. These efforts have resulted in our work becoming part of history in Canada. We also spent much time building a strong relationship with television and print media. We are rarely, if ever, referred to as ambulance attendants, ambulance workers or even worse - ambulance drivers. Fund raising projects like the CHEO Telethon, Roger Neilson Foundation, Food Bank Drive, Toy Mountain, Team Diabetes, Clyde Flynn Memorial Golf Tournament and even the Djamshid Popal Transfer helped raise our profile and educate the community. The PPAO has worked tirelessly to make sure that the word "paramedic" is deeply injected into the community.

We worked hard to make sure paramedics get the respect they deserve...

We also had a major stake in high profile events like Public Safety Occupation inclusion for early retirement, the Ontario Prehospital Advanced Life Support study release, the Alice Martin Coroners Inquest, the right to choose an Ontario College of Paramedics and even the intense lobby effort to hire more paramedics in Ottawa. Part of our lobby efforts included presentations to council, councillor ride-outs, television media ride-outs, newsprint media ride-outs and firm participation in the EKOS survey which confirmed that paramedics were a priority in Ottawa. This lobby effort climaxed when the PPAO worked on eliminating forced shift extension. We conducted detailed research into overtime data. The results astonished our councillors and demonstrated that an average of 42 paramedics per day were on various types of coded overtime during 2004, which was costing the tax payer enormous sums of money. It is without a doubt that these hard line statistics were greatly responsible for fuelling the hiring of 52 new paramedics and the new end-of-shift CODE 07 policy.

We inject the profession into the community...

We even found time to get out there into the community and conduct Car Seat Inspections, a blood drive for the Canadian Blood Services and an impressive EMS week display in the Byward Market. Representatives of the PPAO have also attended memorials for paramedics lost in the line of duty as far away as Nova Scotia and Yellowknife.

When it comes to the financial strength of our membership and in an effort to ensure our longevity, we set up an elaborate computerized budgeting and accounting system. We also worked very hard to successfully acquire payroll deductions - even if it was only for a short time. So far, we have been able to endure immeasurable obstacles while we have continued to forge ahead and look to the future.

We are looking ahead to the future...

When it comes to representing our future paramedics, we have embarked on a training initiative with the local colleges in an effort to certify all paramedic students in CPR, First Aid and most importantly - Automatic External Defibrillation - within the first week of class. This initiative will clearly identify that paramedic students begin their program just as equally qualified as our allied partners and then acquire an intense education to become paramedics. We are also supporting students by certifying them as Car Seat Inspectors and providing them with an elaborate resumé kit that includes interactive database information for every service in the province.

Paramedics are heard loud and clear...

The PPAO carries a strong message and we have been able to deliver that message through an impressive website, bimonthly newsletters, Canadian Emergency News magazine and many other unprecedented communication mechanisms. Sometimes we make waves, but I am one who believes that strength, strategy and determination are more amicable than sticking your head in the sand every time a hot button issue comes up.

The membership is very much responsible for our success...

Our efforts, along with many of these achievements, would not be possible without the strength of our membership. Don't kid yourself. It is the commitment of the membership that motivates the executive to prevail. The paramedics in Ottawa should be very proud of what we have been able to achieve in such a short period of time. This pride is echoed by paramedics throughout Canada who have been closely following the precedence setting work being done here in the nation's capital. And you know what? I am definitely proud to be a part of it.

POLYSPORIN FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Darryl Wilton, President

So, now that we know payroll deductions are gone, we must accept it and continue to move ahead.

There are people who turn away from obstacles in their life and then there are people who attack obstacles head-on only because they are determined to move forward and prevail. I have the privilege of knowing over 300 paramedics who I have seen demonstrate very specific characteristics on many occasions; adapt, improvise and overcome. This is what we must do as an association. We must move forward together.

The road ahead is not easy. There is a lot of work to be done.

It is without a doubt that Payroll Deductions are definitely regarded as a very vital resource to any not-for-profit community group - but they are not the only option we have available to us. The PPAO is immediately enacting our contingency plan to initiate secure automated Pre-Authorized Debits (PAD's) through our host bank. In an effort to protect our membership, we have already conducted extensive research and are confident that this method of dues payments is remarkably static and very secure.

When is your executive board going to move forward?

We began to run full steam ahead as soon as we received the news. It is without a doubt that this will involve an exhaustive effort to distribute and collect authorization forms, contracts and VOID cheques from each and every paramedic member. Of the more than 300 paramedics in Ottawa, only 16 paramedics are non-members. The volume of work ahead of us is enormous but with your cooperation, I am confident that this chapter will prevail. We have many reasons to forge ahead and this newsletter identifies many of those reasons.

What will you see as we enact our contingency plan?

We are in the process of appointing an ambassador to each start time on every platoon in order to better facilitate this process. Over the next few weeks, these ambassadors will provide you with new PPAO registration forms and Pre-Authorized Debit contracts. All you have to do is sign the contracts and attach a void cheque. It is our hope that you will help us expedite this process by handing your completed forms and void cheques back to the PPAO as soon as possible.

We are currently finalizing the legal and financial logistics with management at the Royal Bank of Canada and the Canadian Payments Association who are responsible for regulating all Pre-Authorized Debits. At this point in time, we are setting Pre-Authorized Debits at the fixed rate of \$11/month (\$132/year). The PPAO will absorb service charges which will amount to approximately \$6 per year per member. We will also grant each member 3 months of free membership for the inconvenience.

The Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa needs your help to make this project a success.

Again, we are encouraging the membership to help us expedite the change to Pre-Authorized Debits so that we can continue to chart our course. Our goal is to have every member recommitted to Pre-Authorized Debits by October.

The outcome of this Labour Relations Board meeting has resulted in a temporary set-back that will see the PPAO retrace our last two years of progress in the revenue department. Essentially, we will see ourselves starting over at zero and we will need to recommit each and every member one-at-a-time. Lucky for us, paramedics are a very passionate and dedicated group of professionals who tend to prevail when the defecation hits the occilating ventilator :)

You should be confident that the Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa executive are doing what it takes to prevail.

Ppao merchandise order yours today!



Travel Mugs
\$12.00



Breakaway Lanyards
\$5.00



T-Shirts (navy or grey)
\$21.50



Golf Shirts
\$36.00

EMS WEEK 2005

Giuseppe Federico, Chair – PPAO EMS Week 2005 Activities

May 15 to the 22nd 2005 was Canadian Emergency Medical Services Week and the PPAO celebrated EMS Week by putting on a display on George Street in the Byward Market. The display consisted of a Paramedic Unit, Rescue One (the gator), an Impala ERV, an Expedition pulling the gator trailer, a multi-media educational presentation, the PPAOs new 10 x 10 canopy and a fantastic display board put together by Sue Noel showcasing Ottawa Paramedics in action.

Roughly a thousand people came through the three-day weekend exposé that was put on by Paramedics volunteering their time. Residents and visitors to the city took pictures, asked questions and watched the multi-media presentation. Children received colouring books, public first aid and CPR courses were encouraged, the car seat inspection program was encouraged to members of the public with little ones, and we even got to showcase our level of care to members of related international organizations that were truly impressed.

This three-day event could not have been possible without a lot of help. I would like to thank Steve Dodge, Andrew Gleeson, Sue Noel, Yvonne Malbasha, Robin Villeneuve, Norm Robillard, Rob Brunet, Claudine Gregoire, Linda Blackman, Annik Lagassé, Matt Smith, Sarah Kazaniwsky, Darryl Wilton, Steve Leu, Dave Darling, Pierre Sabourin and Anne-Marie Piché for all their contributions.

The weekend was a huge success and plans are in the works so that next years EMS Week will be bigger and better!



YEARS OF PRACTICE

Annie Gregoire, Director of Membership Services

I would like to introduce Ed Ouston who has been practicing as an Advanced Care Paramedic with the City of Ottawa since August 15, 2001 (almost 4 years now). Some of us know Ed as a fellow paramedic. Some of us know Ed as a really nice guy. Some of us may not know Ed at all.

Since Ed started as a paramedic, he has been able to take advantage of many great opportunities during his career. Besides being an ACP, Ed has been a preceptor and educator, he provided medical coverage on the set of many big movies including "Titanic" and "Vertical Limit". Ed does not take these amazing experiences for granted as they have allowed him travel to very beautiful countries like Mexico and New Zealand; just to name a couple.

A mixture of good liability insurance, open-minded international medical directors, a sound mind and an interest in travel has given Ed a wealth of experience most of us could only dream of.

That is quite a load of accomplishments for a paramedic who has only been around 4 years. Isn't it?

The truth is Ed Ouston has been a paramedic for 27 years. He started as a first aid provider in 1969 and then became a Primary Care Paramedic in 1978. Ed finally completed his ACP in British Columbia during 1985.

"Grey hairs" you say? Ed responds, "wisdom!!!"

What Ed Ouston's case can teach us is that there is a difference between *Start Dates* and *Years of Practice*. *Start Dates* are typically monitored by unions and employers while *Years of Practice* tend to be overlooked. The Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa wants to make sure that people like Ed Ouston are recognized for the experience they have as a paramedic. By tracking this information, we will be able to ensure that our members receive prestigious Long Service Awards and other acknowledgements when they are eligible for them.

This year, we will see many special events such as the Paramedicine 2005 Conference, which will be held in Ottawa from September 16-18. In an effort to have these hard working paramedics recognized for their devotion to the profession, the PPAO is currently in the process of researching true *Years of Practice* for every Ottawa Paramedic. In the coming weeks, each member of the PPAO will be contacted to verify your *Years of Practice* so please dust off your documents and confirm your first year of work as a paramedic. Your cooperation is much appreciated. Thank-you!

Annual General Meeting Overview

Darryl Wilton, President

The PPAO is pleased to announce that our first official Annual General Meeting (AGM) was a success! Each year, during the Tuesday and Wednesday of EMS week (which falls on the third week of May), the PPAO will continue to hold two AGM's in an effort to cover most of the platoons.

So, for those of you who couldn't make it, what did you miss?

Well, lets just say your executive board rushed through a wealth of information in less than 2 hours and we even took time to break for pizza and beverages. The most popular comment we received was, "wow, I didn't know all of that was going on".

This is the exact reason why the PPAO has AGM's...

As a Board of Directors, it is our job to make sure we keep everyone in the loop and that can be very difficult when we have 300 members, working 24 hours a day, over 365 days a year. The AGM is the only annual opportunity for the membership to have a two-way dialogue with your entire Board of Directors. In doing so, we are also able to address issues and provide you with information or answers that are not available by any other means.

The PPAO has gone to great lengths in an effort to communicate with our members.

The PPAO has already received numerous commendations from associations and other organizations across Canada due to our solid communications mechanisms. We have been able to produce a website appraised at \$35000-\$40000 for under \$1500. Our internet presence also includes a secure members area with a wealth of interactive features hidden inside (Think Tank, Shift Exchanger, Account Info, Meeting Minutes, etc). We have an elaborate electronic e-mailing system and snail mailing system. We generate bimonthly local newsletters which alternate with bimonthly articles in Canadian Emergency News. We have a bulletin board, rapid posting system, web based phone system, powerful database system and even our own alphanumeric pager software. Basically, the PPAO provides a level of information and accessibility to our members that is unprecedented in any other paid or volunteer organization. As a result, our members are able to be as tapped into everything as they want to be.

So, why attend AGM's if you are already receiving all of this info?

It is important to attend AGM's because the info we are able to provide through all of our other communications mechanisms only covers the surface of our initiatives. In addition, these other communications mechanisms only offer a one-way flow of information and don't give the membership a chance to digest initiatives by interactively asking questions and obtaining answers. For example, many paramedics know that the PPAO is the sole provider of Car Seat Inspections in the City of Ottawa, but the only way to find out why this public service is fundamentally important to the longevity of the PPAO, is by attending the AGM. The same goes for a number of other sensitive issues, including lobbying initiatives, where we need feedback from our members before we commit our strategy in print.

In the future, you will continue to see the PPAO involved in many pivotal issues. The information provided at Annual General Meetings is very important and should always be regarded as such. Each one of your executive members easily volunteers over 1000 hours a year in an effort to enhance the profession for you. So please plan to set aside two hours each year to hear from your Board of Directors. We hope to see you at our next Annual General Meeting which will be held during EMS week of 2006.

Thanks to all of those who came out this year!



LINE OF DUTY DEATHS

Ex-paramedic, ex-firefighter, current Ottawa dispatcher Patrick Lamoureux attended Yellowknife's Line of Duty Deaths on behalf of the Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa.

Patrick reported that the families of these two fallen fire-medics were completely moved by the presence of the PPAO and the beautiful wreath that we presented to the families.

CAR SEAT INSPECTIONS

Darryl Wilton, President

The PPAO is now the primary provider of car seat inspection clinics in the City of Ottawa.

The success of Car Seat Inspection Clinics should be regarded as very important to paramedics. As a result, we have created a 4-prong strategy in an effort to keep this high-profile public service alive.

COMPONENT I HIGH PROFILE SPONSOR

Just to give you some background information, we have an agreement with the City of Ottawa Public Health Department and the CHUM group (NEWRO, CFRA, BOBFM, etc) that we will provide this monthly service on a volunteer basis at various community locations. These community locations range from paramedic bases to retailers to car dealerships and we usually have between 6-12 concurrent inspection stations running at a time. It is important to have the CHUM group on board as a sponsor because they can provide paramedics with a significant amount of media exposure and they are also able to attract various community sponsors for food and supplies.

COMPONENT II TRAINING

Car Seat Clinics are broken down into two main aspects:

1. the installation
2. the inspection

It takes 2 people to properly install a car seat but not every installer needs to be a fully trained and nationally certified inspector. The most impor-

tant part of the program is having each clinic adequately staffed with volunteers.

As a result, the PPAO has created 3 levels of training and participating for Car Seat Inspections. Please let us know which one will suit you:

1. Assistant - on-the-job training (anyone can be an assistant)
2. Technician - 4 hour didactic component with certification (Oct 2005)
3. Inspector - 16 hour didactic component and certification (Oct 2005)

These levels of training will be provided free of charge to all PPAO paramedic members, student members, associate members and corporate members. We have plans to host more training sessions in October of 2005 and expect a high level of participation from students at La Cité Collégiale and Algonquin College as it is part of their curriculum to obtain a number of hours doing community work.

COMPONENT III MARKETING

The PPAO has embarked on an initiative with Global Profiles, a nationally certified distributor of the EMP4EMS kit. Basically, EMP4EMS is very similar to the Vial of Life. It is a self-explanatory kit that parents can purchase for \$20.

The bilingual EMP4EMS kit contains 2 window stickers, a profile card for the child, a picture slot, a mounting adapter for the back of car seats and instructions. The idea behind EMP4EMS is it provides an ID system for infants who are not able to communicate with paramedics and increases awareness about paramedics in the community.

The importance of this kit can easily be recognized by any paramedic who has shown up on the scene of any MVC where infants and adults have been separated or transported to separate facilities. Without EMP4EMS it

is impossible to obtain a history of infant patients. It even becomes difficult for hospital staff to later release the infant patient to those who claim to be relatives or the parents if the patient's identification was not verified coming into the hospital.

COMPONENT IV COMMISSIONED SALES

One of the most difficult aspects of providing a free public service is to continue to attract people to provide the service. This is why we provide free training and free lunches at every clinic.

The PPAO has embarked on a deal with Global Profiles, a national distributor of the EMP4EMS kits, to create commissioned sales for our volunteers. We plan to sell the EMP4EMS kits for \$20 each of which Global Profiles will pass on \$10 worth of commissioned sales to the team who completed the sale. The latest data tells us that each team completes an average of 16 inspections during a 4 hour shift.

FINAL

The PPAO will let you know when we complete contract negotiations with Global Profiles and complete our car seat inspection strategy. In the meantime, all inspection dates are posted at OttawaParamedics.ca in the initiatives section. If you can do anything to help out at the car seat inspection clinics, please contact Greg Furlong or Elizabeth Anderson at OttawaParamedics.ca or at 613-244-0333. If you ask any of our inspectors, the clinics really are a ton



THE PPAO TEAMS UP WITH MEDIA SPONSORS
FOR CAR SEAT INSPECTIONS

TEAM DIABETES

Claudine Grégoire

A few weeks ago, I had the chance of a lifetime. I ran in the 2005 Reykjavik International Marathon in Iceland. I joined Team Diabetes Canada and along with 203 other Canadians, participated in the single largest fundraising event I had ever taken part of. I am happy to report that my fundraising was a success, amounting to over \$6,000, and of that, **more than \$4,000 came from Ottawa Paramedics**. Along with the other Canadians, Team Diabetes Iceland 2005 raised more than **\$1,318,000 (NET)!!!** I will forever be grateful to you for supporting me in this endeavour, and I will never forget the experience that you have allowed me to live. I know that what we did in Iceland will make a difference. Ottawa Paramedics can be proud of that. Every one of you deserves a pat on the back, and this article and these photos are my tribute to you.

We arrived in Iceland on Thursday August 18th - 2 days before the marathon - jetlagged, hungry and happy - what an adventure we had gotten ourselves into! We spent that day recovering and meeting our teammates from across Canada. On the Friday morning, we had a fun-run scheduled for those interested. Our trainer said that the "handful" of us who wanted to participate could meet at the hotel lobby at 0930. As it turned out, the "handful" was approximately 120 people!

On the morning of the marathon, things looked gloomy. Big rain clouds and about 12C. As we were getting ready to take the team photos, it started pouring... Spirits were so high in the hotel lobby that people were still laughing! All those pre-race jitters, I guess. With a 0900 departure, time was flying! The sky cleared a bit before the start and it had stopped raining when we started running. It rained later for about 20 minutes, but after that the sky cleared up and the sun came out. I actually got a sun bum.

I ran for 24 km. My knees were so sore that I had to walk the last 18 km (at that point I could walk faster than I could run...). It was a beautiful course. Most of it was on the oceanfront bicycle path that goes around Reykjavik. The most amazing, though, was seeing all these Canadian flags along the course. Not only did we have cheerleaders from our own team (family members and staff), but several Icelanders were on the sidelines cheering US on! All along the way we could hear "Go Canada!", and "Go Team Diabetes!" What a thrill.

I finished the 42.2 km in 6:14:47. I guess I should be happy with that. I finished. I cried, I suffered. I was cheered on by other team members. I cheered other team members on. I thought of my Dad, who lives with diabetes. I thought of my Mom, who trained with me to do the same marathon but had to drop out for severe health reasons. I talked to her. I sang to my MP3 player. I found out I had exactly 5:30 of songs on it. And in the end, I crossed the finish line jogging, because my ego would not let me cross it walking. I finished! I cried some more, and sunk to my knees because I couldn't stand up anymore. It took me 20 minutes to walk the 300 meters back to the hotel. I FINISHED.

That night, at our victory dinner, everyone was hobbling. Some couldn't go down the stairs; some couldn't go up the stairs. Everyone was talking of one thing - the marathon. It was the best feeling in world. Everyone was in agony, everyone was happy; everyone was there for the same reason.

The next morning, we packed and got back on the bus to the airport. The Ottawa team as well as most people from Ontario, Manitoba and Eastern Canada were leaving at 1645 in the afternoon, most of us through Boston. The plane was full. The plane was filled to about 1/4 by Team Diabetes. The agony that we still felt was the furthest thing in our minds. We had finished!

Thank you. I could never have done it without you.



Congratulations Claudine!!

The Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa, its members and the Executive Board wish to extend their congratulations to Claudine Grégoire for successfully completing the 2005 Reykjavik International Marathon in Iceland.