



## Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa

300 March Road (4th Floor)  
Ottawa, ON K2K2E2  
emergency: 9-1-1  
phone: 613-244-0333  
e-mail: mail@OttawaParamedics.ca

# OttawaParamedics.ca

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By Suzanne Noël, BSc(Kin), PCP  
Director of Print Media

The PPAO has been so busy we are wondering when it's gonna slow down. We have been participating in so many interesting and dynamic initiatives this summer that we realized we don't have enough space in this magazine! So, a special thanks goes out to CEN Publisher/Editor, Lyle Blumhagen, for making it work every two months

## Disaster—Theatrical Production

In the last edition of CEN, you heard about a play called *Disaster*. We spent eight months working on this collaboration between the PPAO and the New Theatre of Ottawa in bringing paramedicine to the stage.

This fantastic metaphorical play was written by a playwright from Eastern Ontario and was performed by a small cast of professional actors. Every performance for this theatre company is always sold out due to their high acclaim in the arts community.

The PPAO worked closely with writer David O'Meara, director John Koensgen and actor Sarah Finn (playing a paramedic in her mid-20s) so we could ensure our profession was presented and showcased properly. In coordination with Ottawa Paramedic Service and the City of Ottawa, Darryl Wilton and myself provided technical advisory, professional guidance, equipment and uniforms to the New Theatre of Ottawa in order for their performance to have a more authentic appeal to the paramedic community, allied agencies and of course, civilians at large.

Sarah Finn also received real-life exposure to our world through dozens of coaching sessions where she learned to

accurately simulate paramedic skills. Let us tell you, this girl could pull off some very convincing 'sharp-less' IVs. Sarah also joined paramedics on ride-outs where she participated in everything from treating severe trauma patients to vital signs absent calls.

The posters claimed, "This new level of ingenuity and partnership brought a fresh approach to how the arts community is able to move audiences while helping paramedics deliver powerful messaging." We weren't kidding. The story was phenomenal and the audience was left stunned by this incredible play and many of them were moved to tears by the talented cast.

The play opened with a paramedic at the scene of a collision who was treating a male and female patient. The dynamic metaphorical script evolved like a crazy dream while each character spilled out tales of their imperfect pasts. The play churned out intriguing but confusing stories until the audience was abruptly blindsided at the end of the 90 minute production. With heart pounding silence, it suddenly became clear that another force was at play and things were not as they seemed. The dreamy clutter and confusion came to a shocking end when the audience discovered the two patients were actually communicating with their paramedic daughter in a dream as she guided them through a means to understand how she had suffered a Line of Duty Death at a roadside scene.

The PPAO closed each play by distributing 4x6 information brochures to all audience members. The brochures identified that paramedics have almost twice as many occupational fatalities as police officers or firefighters, that 74 per cent of paramedic occupational deaths are traffic

related, and asked drivers to respect Ontario's Move Over Law by moving over far enough to leave an empty lane next to paramedics on scene.

We are now looking at bringing this play to Ottawa college and university students, as well as a larger arts community such as Toronto! Who knows, maybe it will even make it to Peel's provincial conference! Are you guys listening out there in Peel?



## EMS Week Barbecue

The Professional Paramedic Association of Ottawa combined forces with Algonquin College's class of 2008 paramedic students to kick off EMS Week with a three-day barbecue. The event was coordinated by recent grad and new Ottawa Paramedic Service recruit, PCP Micah Rietschlin.

Micah orchestrated a 50:50 draw, donation box for the HELP Fund and lined up a number of paramedic students during this three-day event, while the PPAO fronted funds for burgers, hot dogs and drinks. Jim Whittle, Paramedic Program Coordinator from Algonquin College, also sponsored this event which raised over \$400 for the HELP Fund and fed over 300 paramedic service staff.

Equipment controller Brian Bernard won the \$40 Tim Horton's coupon while PCP Pino Federico won the \$110 from the 50:50 draw. Everyone who attended wanted us to pass on a job well done to Micah!



**MICAH RIETSCHLIN** (left) running the barbecue with Algonquin College Paramedic Students.

### EMS Week—AGM

The PPAO also held our AGM during EMS Week. We ended up having a default election with 13 nominations, 12 acceptances and therefore 12 people kicking off the new executive.

We would like to introduce the new executive in alphabetical order by last name: Jennifer Biskup, Chantal Dumas, Bruno Gendron, Patrick Lamoureux, Robert Mallett, Kane Newell, Sue Noël, Micah Rietschlin, Yannick Roussel, Jeremiah Soucie, Rob Wilson and Darryl Wilton.

The transition is ongoing with the change-over taking effect on August 1st, 2008, with positions being announced at the same time. You can find more information at [www.OttawaParamedics.ca](http://www.OttawaParamedics.ca).

### EMS Weekend—Byward Market

The PPAO combined forces with both Algonquin College and La Cité Collégiale class of 2008 paramedic students to host EMS Weekend displays in the Byward Market. The event was coordinated by PCP Amanda Hagmann and president Darryl Wilton.

Thanks to the National Capital Marathon being in town, our paramedic booth was inundated with tourists and curious kids.

The PPAO handed out tons of our Scope of Practice brochures and Child Find ID Kits to parents, as well as thousands of paramedic balloons to kids. A

very inquisitive public was given answers to questions regarding first aid kits, deployment, scope of practice, education, safety, injuries and ailments. Numerous sets of vital signs were taken with many explanations being offered for 3 and 12 lead ECGs. A big thank-you goes out to PCP Kane Newell, Algonquin College paramedic student David Anderson and La Cité Collégiale paramedic students Félix Clouthier, Manon Diotte, the boys from Travois who helped us set up and Ryan (who disappeared before we could get his last name)!



**PARAMEDIC** public relations in the Byward Market.

### EMS Week—Seatbelt Campaign

The PPAO combined forces with the Ontario Provincial Police to wrap up the spring seatbelt campaign.

The two groups conducted roadside spot checks for both seatbelts and child car seats. The roadside car seat inspections were conducted by trained car seat instructor, Patrick Lamoureux, who is also an EMT-A (PCP) from Alberta and Communications Officer in Ottawa.

There were 169 infant/child and booster seats inspected at four different roadside spot checks off Highway 417.

A quarter of the inspections were booster seats, which are relatively simple to install and have been mandatory in Ontario for two years now. Lamoureux found numerous problems with the infant and child seats. Some of these seats were installed so loosely that they could move back and forth over 12 inches, rather than the maximum of one inch. Some harnesses holding the child into the seat were so loose that the child could have been removed from the seat without even undoing the harness. Parents were reminded to adjust the harness properly and

inspect the entire restraint system each time the child is seated.

Overall, 75 per cent of the seats inspected were not installed correctly, so Lamoureux walked each parent through the proper process. The rest had infants who were not secured properly. Of all the inspections, only two drivers were found to have perfect installations.



**OTTAWA PARAMEDICS** and Ontario Provincial Police conduct roadside child seat inspections.

### EMS Week—Sirens For Life Campaign

Our partnership with the Canadian Blood Service's Sirens For Life campaign concluded its fourth year on May 30th. This national blood drive was a resounding success and resulted in hundreds of pints of civilian blood being collected on behalf of emergency service workers.

Director of Community Services Patrick Lamoureux coordinated the entire kickoff and conclusion for this national annual blood drive at Ottawa Paramedic Service headquarters. The event included Ottawa Paramedics, Ottawa Police, Ottawa Firefighters, RCMP, OPP media and other agencies.

Our media release stated: *This is the time of year when the gift of life is needed more than ever. Paramedics see a significantly higher incidence of trauma as soon as grad season begins. Life-threatening traumatic emergencies remain high throughout the summer months as people take to the outdoors and engage in risk-related activities. Trauma is the leading cause of preventable death for Canadians aged 0-44 years and the vast majority of trauma patients require blood products to survive.*



through television, radio and newsprint media. Darryl Wilton and Amanda Haggmann also appeared in a segment on Roger's Daytime Television.

Attention paramedic associations ... feel free to "borrow" a text copy of our media release at [www.OttawaParamedics.ca](http://www.OttawaParamedics.ca) for your own campaigns next year.



**SIRENS FOR LIFE BLOOD DRIVE** at Ottawa Paramedic Service headquarters.

The PPAO would like to thank the following people for ensuring paramedics could promote the profession without too many hiccups: JP Trottier for providing enlarged photos for our Byward Market Display, helping with set-up and for orchestrating the Canadian Blood Services media launch; Bob Davidson for facilitating the PPAO as well as providing guidance and assistance for planning all events; Sean Cook for providing administrative assistance and support; Joe Micucci for sharing CME rooms and providing a large display board; Tom Dunn for providing administrative assistance and support; John Rathier for helping coordinate equipment for special events, and; equipment controller Brian Bernard and his team for assisting with vehicles, equipment and stock.

### National Anaphylaxis Roundtable

Although anaphylaxis is a life-threatening medical emergency, fatalities are rare and usually preventable. If a severe allergic reaction does occur, it is important that an individual receives proper treatment, prescriptions and referrals as quickly as possible. All medical professionals are interested in determining ways to improve patient outcomes, especially in the pre-hospital field and emergency departments.

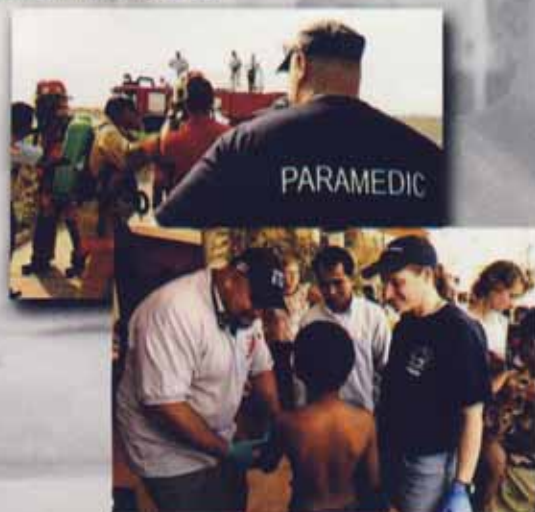
The Paramedic Association of Canada asked Darryl Wilton and myself (Suzanne Noël) to attend a national roundtable discussion in an effort to ensure paramedics had input on new research and definitions regarding anaphylaxis. The Anaphylaxis Canada roundtable discussion was held at the Toronto International Airport Sheraton Gateway Hotel on May 2, 2008. We were selected by the Paramedic Associa-



David McAntony  
Gibson Foundation

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tion of Canada due to previous work we performed for Anaphylaxis Canada's national publication *Anaphylaxis in Schools*. Medical doctors, epidemiologists, allergists and researchers were in attendance from across Canada. We were the only two people representing Canada's paramedics and Darryl did a great job of demonstrating our very underestimated clinical knowledge.

Here are some current stats that were provided by Anaphylaxis Canada:

- 22 per cent of Canadians suffer from a non-food allergy
- 6.8 per cent of Canadians suffer from a food allergy
- nine per cent of Canadian adults have asthma
- 12 per cent of Canadian children (12-19) suffer from asthma
- 1 out of 50 students has a peanut allergy
- 40 per cent of Canadians read food labels looking for allergens
- 80 per cent of parents support having allergy policies in schools
- Costco is the cheapest place to buy an Epi-Pen

The group worked to:

- find gaps in anaphylaxis management
- develop a national definition for allergic reactions
- develop a study—likely ED/MD based
- develop a standardized treatment plan for anaphylaxis so that the disease receives the respect and treatment it deserves.

Gaps were identified in the emergency department (ED) as it was the most common medical setting for the diagnosis and management of anaphylaxis. Overall, epinephrine is underused and underprescribed by ED doctors, with only 24 per cent use for severe life-threatening reactions, only 16 per cent of patients prescribed epi and only 12 per cent referred to an allergist.


The group identified that there are many international definitions of anaphylaxis with many of them being outdated. In an effort to encourage people to identify the need for aggressive treatment of

anaphylaxis, we attempted to develop a preliminary simplified national definition: anaphylaxis is a serious reaction that is rapid in onset, involves one or more organ system(s) and may cause death.

While lobbying for paramedic involvement in a study, Darryl Wilton made a good argument for the need to collect both MD and paramedic stats as double-cohort consideration. Darryl identified a higher incidence of both allergic reaction and anaphylactic reaction treatment by paramedics than MDs or RNs, with many of these cases being resolved by the time the patient becomes transferred to the emergency department staff. In an effort to maintain data integrity, it was suggested that information be collected from


the professional who administered treatment. Darryl also cited a retrospective review of anaphylaxis related 9-1-1 calls in the Greater Toronto Area (Salter J et al abstract: 2000) which demonstrated that paramedics have the highest rate of epi treatment of acute anaphylactic life-threatening emergencies, with 66 per cent of patients receiving epi from a paramedic, 16 per cent from self, 13 per cent from a friend, parent, caregiver or coworker, and only six per cent from an MD or RN.

As for the anaphylaxis treatment plan, that will come with the conclusion of the study and will involve everything from acute treatment of anaphylaxis, to prescriptions, to referrals for follow-up.



## PARAMEDIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

**The Meadows Golf and Country Club**  
4335 Hawthorne Road, Ottawa, ON  
Wed Sept 03 - 11:30am SHOTGUN start!



Proceeds go to 4 y/o Renée "Moose" Stocks

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