

# The Community Paramedicine Initiative

BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS) is working with the Ministry of Health, regional health



authorities, the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia (Local 873), the First Nations Health Authority, and others to implement the Community Paramedicine Initiative.

The goal is to see 80 new full-time equivalents (FTEs) hired to support community paramedicine programs in rural and remote communities.

## Program objectives:

1. Contribute to the stabilization of paramedic staffing in rural and remote communities.
2. Bridge health service delivery gaps in the community, identified in collaboration with local primary care teams.

## Implementing Community Paramedicine

Implementation began in April 2015 with nine prototype communities selected in partnership with the regional health authorities.

A broad provincial rollout began in April 2016 with the selection of 76 rural and remote communities, with coverage including surrounding regions and neighbouring First Nations communities.

The final phase of implementation began in January 2018 with the selection of 23 additional communities. A total of 99 BC communities have now been selected for community paramedicine services.

## Community FAQs

### How are communities selected?

Community selection for the rollout was guided by the program's key objectives.

### How do patients access a community paramedic?

Patients are referred by their primary care physician or other member of the local health care team.

### Do community paramedics have special training?

All community paramedics hold at least a Primary Care Paramedic license with IV endorsement, and complete a specialized orientation program.

## For more information:

Visit: [www.bcehs.ca](http://www.bcehs.ca) and click on **Our Services**

Email: [CommunityParamedicine@bcehs.ca](mailto:CommunityParamedicine@bcehs.ca)

**BCEHS** | BC Emergency Health Services

# Community Paramedicine in British Columbia

## Helping to improve health care in rural communities



# Community Paramedicine

British Columbia is improving access to health care in rural and remote communities by expanding the role of qualified paramedics.

Community paramedics provide primary care services to increase access to basic health care services in non-urgent settings, in patients' homes or the community. This is done within their training and experience and in partnership with local health care providers.

Community paramedicine in BC is intended primarily for older patients living with chronic conditions such as heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes, or who are at risk of falls.



## Benefits for BC

- ✓ Better access to health care for rural and remote communities
- ✓ Paramedics work alongside other health care professionals without overlapping roles
- ✓ Fewer hand-offs between health care professionals
- ✓ Fewer gaps in health care services
- ✓ Fewer medically unnecessary 911 calls and trips to emergency departments
- ✓ Improved recruitment and retention of paramedics in rural and remote communities

# Community Paramedicine Services

Community paramedics provide the following services in their communities.

## Community Outreach & Awareness

Getting to know the local community and neighbouring First Nations communities, and helping them understand how community paramedicine can improve access to health care, is the first priority. Community paramedics work with health care providers in the area to identify service gaps, and how together they can improve the health of residents, particularly older residents with chronic conditions.

## Health Promotion

Encouraging patients to take responsibility for managing their own care and treatment – where safe and appropriate to do so – is an important step in improving health outcomes. This is a role community paramedics can readily assume, along with providing seminars on CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and using an AED (automated external defibrillator).

## Wellness Checks

Older people living on their own, often with little or no support, may need someone to check in on occasion to see how they're doing. Regular visits from a community paramedic can help these patients live longer in their homes, reduce their reliance on medically unnecessary 911 calls, and help ensure they stay connected with their primary care physician. Patients are referred by their doctor or other community health care provider, with the service provided at no cost to the patient.

## Wellness Clinics

Many communities host wellness clinics and/or medical check-ins for patients with specific health issues such as diabetes. By participating in these events, community paramedics can take on some of the services that will allow other health care professionals – such as doctors, nurses, and dietitians – to spend even more time with their patients.

## Community Paramedicine Home Health Monitoring (CP HHM)

BCEHS is participating in the Provincial Home Health Monitoring (HHM) program. Through technology-enabled monitoring of key health indicators, CP HHM extends the capacity of community paramedics to provide chronic disease management support to a wider range of older adults in rural and remote communities. To learn more about the CP HHM program in your area, talk to your community paramedic or primary health care provider.

