



**Manitoba  
Government  
and General  
Employees'  
Union**

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**ANY QUESTIONS?**  
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March 9, 2015

The Honourable Greg Selinger  
Room 204, Legislative Building  
450 Broadway  
Winnipeg, MB. R3C 0V8

Dear Premier Selinger;

I would like to extend my congratulations to you on being reaffirmed in your position this past weekend.

As you are no doubt aware, it has been reported that the future of paramedicine was a pivotal issue in the leadership campaign. I have been hearing concerns from paramedics that commitments may have been made regarding self-regulation of their profession.

I am writing to ask for your confirmation that the government will proceed with self-regulation for paramedics, and to ask that you provide the timeline for this important initiative.

Mr. Premier, self-regulation is a key step in fixing emergency medical services in Manitoba. As you know, the critical challenges facing EMS in Manitoba are serious:

- Unacceptably long response times in rural Manitoba;
- Ever expanding emergency room offload delays;
- The fatigue problem paramedics face in rural Manitoba that sees medics work for literally days on end without sleep, putting paramedics, motorists and patients at risk;
- The growing problem of ever increasing inter-facility transfers, diverting paramedics and ambulances away from their communities and exacerbating the paramedic fatigue problem;
- The failure to provide wage parity for rural paramedics with their counterparts in Winnipeg, resulting in a drain of paramedics from rural Manitoba similar to that seen with doctors and other health care professionals;
- The delay in implementing a community paramedicine program in rural Manitoba. This program has been researched and ready to be rolled out for years, and has proven successful in Winnipeg, but has not been offered to rural Manitoba;
- No plan to expand the power stretcher program across Manitoba. This is a program that has proven to pay for itself by reducing back injuries by 70%;
- A further expansion in Winnipeg of the most expensive EMS system in Canada by allowing fire medics to provide 12-leads and IV starts thus duplicating a service that already exists;



- Siphoning precious health care dollars away from proven EMS system response methods toward the troubled, STARS air ambulance program; and
- Independent, expert recommendations to improve EMS in Manitoba that have not been implemented.

You may recall the sense of relief and optimism many paramedics felt upon the release of the EMS Review two years ago. They believed, as did I, that we were finally turning a corner where the problems facing paramedics and emergency medical care would finally be addressed. I can report that whatever optimism they felt two years ago has fully evaporated. I am now informed the EMS Review implementation task group, which had been chaired by Reg Toews, has been disbanded. The message this has sent to Manitoba paramedics is not very positive.

When the Health Professions Advisory Council (HPAC) held hearings on the self-regulation proposal, it heard from hundreds of front-line paramedics about the importance of modernizing and respecting the paramedic profession in Manitoba. The Minister of Health, the Honourable Sharon Blady, has now received the recommendations from HPAC on how to proceed. It is time for the government to make its intentions clear.

I look forward to a prompt response to the questions I have put forward, Mr. Premier. I know I speak for paramedics when I say we are looking for a partner in moving EMS care and the paramedic profession to a higher level.

Sincerely,



Michelle Gawronsky  
MGEU President

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