



Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Paramedic Leaders Formalize Position on Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Response in Ontario

“Difficult times bring difficult decisions and those decisions need to be evidence-based”.

That was the quote from AMEMSO President Norm Gale as he released an important research document into the current public debate between paramedics and firefighters.

The Association of Municipal Emergency Medical Services of Ontario (AMEMSO) is the organization dedicated to providing municipalities with the pre-hospital perspective required to make the difficult decisions concerning health care provision and the best value for public spending.

The report, prepared by the Toronto-based firm Performance Concepts Consulting, is an evidence-based overview of emergency medical response in Ontario and how that activity affects patient outcomes. The key observations are as follows:

- Medical research indicates that tiered response involving firefighter support is effective for the 1-2% of emergency medical calls that are truly life-threatening. There is no evidence confirming that fire response impacts patient outcomes beyond this identified subset of medical calls.
- When considering what is best for the patient, Ontario has established and monitors training standards to regulate paramedic competencies such as diagnostic skills, critical thinking abilities, and psycho-social assessment. Paramedics are a highly-skilled component of Canada’s health care system that brings the “hospital to the patient”.
- The decision to utilize firefighters in emergency medical response should be balanced amongst effectiveness (patient outcome), efficiency (cost), and risk management realities with consideration to the principle of *providing the right care, by the right provider, at the right time.*

The public has well-placed confidence in both paramedics and firefighters as they perform their separate roles. As well, AMEMSO appreciates that there is a place for firefighter support in pre-hospital care with the degree of involvement left to the respective municipal leaders. AMEMSO remains committed to furthering the development of responsible public policy.

The complete report is posted on the AMEMSO website, www.emsontario.ca. Specific questions may be directed to the AMEMSO Executive Director Jim Price @ <x.d@emsontario.ca>.