

Medical Field

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A. Occupations

1) Paramedic/ Emergency Medical Attendant

- Not a regulated profession in Ontario
- However, certification in Ontario is a requirement - (AEMCA) Advanced Emergency Medical Care Assistant Exam provided by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

Role

Source: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/ambul/ehs_mn.html

- In Ontario there are three levels of paramedic qualification. The primary care paramedic is the basic entry-to-practice qualification for ambulance workers. In addition to providing service in accordance with the Basic Life Support Patient Care Standards, a primary care paramedic is qualified to provide semi-automatic defibrillation and to administer symptom relief medications (e.g. glucagon/glucose, nitroglycerin, epinephrine, ventolin and ASA).
- An advanced care paramedic, in addition to holding the qualifications of a primary care paramedic, has additional training and base hospital certification in skills of as endotracheal intubation, foreign body removal from the airway, manual defibrillation and cardiac monitoring, intravenous therapy and administration of a wide variety of emergency drugs by various routes.
- A critical care paramedic, in addition to being qualified as an advanced care paramedic, is qualified to: provide electrical cardioversion and pacing, maintain and monitor central venous and arterial lines, initiate and maintain gastric intubation and suction, initiate needle thoracostomies and cryothyroidotomies, set ventilator parameters and initiate and maintain mechanical ventilators, interpret medical laboratory test results, manage chest tubes and drainage systems, interpret x-rays, initiate urinary catheters, administer blood and blood products, use doppler flow monitors, carbon dioxide and oximetry monitors, set up and use intravenous infusion pumps.
- All levels of paramedic are certified to perform the advanced skills by the medical director of the ministry designated base hospital program in each area.

Source: <http://www1.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ojf/ojf.jsp?section=Profile&noc=3234&lang=e>

- Assess extent of injuries or illness of trauma victims, patients with respiratory disease and stress, overdose and poisoning victims, industrial accident victims and other ill or injured individuals to determine emergency medical treatment
- Liaise with ambulance dispatch centres, base hospital staff, police, fire, and family members to ensure relevant information is collected and proper treatment is administered
- Administer pre-hospital emergency care, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), oxygen, bandaging and splinting to patients

- Establish and maintain intravenous treatment (IV), apply adjunctive equipment for ventilation and circulation complications, administer medications and provide other emergency treatment to patients
- Transport patients by air, land or water to hospital or other medical facility for further medical care

Educational Requirements

- 2 year college diploma program (i.e., Algonquin, Confederation, Humber, Northern colleges)
- For a listing of training programs in Ontario see the Superior North Emergency Medical Services web site <http://www.thunderbay.ca/ems/index.cfm?fuse=html&pg=511>
- Successful completion of a program entitles graduates to write the provincial (A-EMCA) Advanced Emergency Medical Care Assistant Exam provided by the Ministry of Health.

Skills/Qualities

Source: <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/206.asp>

The most important Essential Skills for paramedics are:

- Document use
- Oral communication
- Problem solving

Technical

- Basic computer skills: word processing, email, internet, spreadsheets, database management
- Operate medical equipment and dispatch systems
- Drive vehicle
- Source: <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/206.asp> (Complexity level scale: 0-4)
 - Use computer-operated machines, such as cardiac monitors or telemetry devices. This involves interpreting readings from these monitors and calibrating them. (1)
 - Use computer-aided dispatch systems, including portable radio systems and pagers.(1)
 - Use word processing. - e.g., to prepare quality assurance reports and professional correspondence.
 - Use a database. For example, they enter information from patient care records. (2)
 - Use a spreadsheet such as Excel or Quattro Pro for scheduling and inventory. (2)
 - Use communications software - e.g., they send and receive e-mail and use fax modems. (2)

Communication

- Superior oral and written communication skills
- Ability to communicate effectively where verbal and non-verbal cues must be used
- Excellent listening skills
- Additional languages an asset

Other

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Able to work under pressure
- In excellent physical health and able to lift weights
- Able to work effectively with minimal supervision
- Ability to understand and follow instruction.
- Ability to work in a stressful environment.
- Ability to make good decisions and use personal judgment.
- Ability to apply interpersonal and patient skills with all age groups, including pediatric and geriatric patients as well as bystanders.
- Ability to lift, move, and secure patients
- Willing to learn and continue to learn

- Safely operate vehicles and drive under adverse conditions

For a detailed breakdown of skills and complexity levels according to the following criteria see the HRSDC web site: <http://www15.hrdcdrhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/206.asp>

- Reading text
- Document use
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral communication
- Thinking skills
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Job task planning and organizing
- Significant use of memory
- Finding information
- Working with others
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

For more information on what is expected see Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
Paramedic Program Standard
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/college/progstan/health/paramedic.html>

Future Trends Affecting Essential Skills

Source: <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/206.asp>

The growing use of computerized equipment and dispatch systems will lead paramedics to new computer applications. They may also be required to gather information in innovative ways, such as perfecting their use of computerized databases and Internet sources of medical information. A growing focus on evidence-based practice will lead practitioners to increased research on a broader range of issues relevant to their occupation. In addition, the trend towards independent practice will call on paramedics to exhibit a heightened degree of problem solving and decision making skills.

Typical Employers

- Hospitals, private ambulance services, municipal and provincial governments, fire departments, industrial settings

Average Hourly Wage

\$18.73 (low) \$23.00 (average) \$29.72 (high)

Salaries vary according to such factors such as experience, level of responsibility, seniority, size of company, size of city, etc.

2) Medical Office Assitant

(administration & some basic backroom duties)

- Non-regulated profession in Ontario
- Certification as a 'Certified Medical Secretary' is available through Ontario Medical Secretaries Association <http://www.omsa-hca.org/>

Role

- Reception duties
- Booking patient appointments, referrals
- Preparing charts, filing
- Billing for medical services
- Medical transcription
- May perform specimen collection and basic office diagnostic procedures

Educational Requirements

- May be trained on the job
- Some complete 8ms-2yrs medical office assistant courses offered through private colleges
- Others take medical office administration programs through community colleges (i.e., Conestoga, Mohawk and Seneca colleges etc.)

Skills/Qualities

Technical

- Basic computer skills - word processing, internet, email, spreadsheet manipulation and database knowledge
- Specialized software (i.e., billing, bookkeeping, scheduling)

Communication

- Able to express yourself clearly in oral and written language
- Bilingualism - English and French may be required

Other

- Medical terminology
- Medical transcription
- Basic understanding of anatomy and physiology
- Able to work independently and as part of a team
- Organized, flexible
- Ability to maintain accuracy while multi-tasking or working under pressure
- Ability to maintain patient confidentiality
- Good interpersonal skills

Typical Employers

- Offices of physicians
- Hospitals, including inpatient and outpatient facilities
- Offices of other health practitioners, i.e., chiropractors and podiatrists; outpatient care centers
- Medical and diagnostic laboratories

Average Hourly Wage

\$15.15/ hour (average) \$19.94/ hour (high) \$10.94/ hour (low)

Salaries vary according to such factors such as experience, level of responsibility, seniority, size of company, size of city, etc.

3) Other Positions in the Medical Field

Physician Assistant (PA)

- Physician Assistant responsibilities include taking a patient's medical history, performing physical examinations, ordering and interpreting laboratory tests, applying casts, prescribing certain medications, diagnosing and treating illness, suturing wounds and assisting in surgery.
- Physician assistants (PAs) have been part of mainstream medicine in the United States for 40 years, but in Canada only the Canadian Forces and in last couple of years Manitoba and Alberta employ PAs or Clinical Assistants. The option of PAs is currently being discussed in Ontario by government and regulatory bodies.
- Physician assistants are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. As part of their comprehensive responsibilities, PAs conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat illnesses, order and interpret tests, counsel on preventive health care, assist in surgery, and in most states in the US can write prescriptions. *Source: American Academy of Physician Assistants* <http://www.aapa.org/geninfo1.html>

B) Labour Market Prospects

General Statement

Source: Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities
<http://www.ontariopropects.info/2004/eng/31.html#health>

The aging health care workforce and the gradual drop in the average age of retirement (from 65 in 1976 to 62 in the late 1990s) mean there will be significant need for health care workers, even though growth in the total number of health care jobs will be slow.

Medical office assistants/medical secretaries are projected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the 2002-2012 period. Job prospects should be best for medical assistants with formal training or experience, particularly those with certification.

Paramedics. Employment for paramedics is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2007. Ambulance services typically do not advertise for workers. Graduates from college programs tend to send in unsolicited applications. As a general rule, workers are initially hired on a temporary basis and from there are moved to regular part-time and then to full-time positions, as vacancies become available. Many ambulance attendants are upgrading their qualifications to paramedic status. *Source: Ontario Job Futures* <http://www1.on.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/ojf/ojf.jsp?lang=e§ion=Profile&noc=3234>

C) ITPs in the Field

Paramedic:

IMGs who frequently provided emergency medical care such as emergency physicians, surgeons, internists, cardiologists and GPs are most suited to this job as they have skills and experience in assessing injuries and life threatening illnesses, administering emergency care, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), oxygen, bandaging and splinting and establishing intravenous treatment (IV). They are also skilled at defibrillation, cardioversion, paracentesis and endotracheal intubation.

Physician Assistant

Almost all ITPs are suited to this job as they have the medical background, knowledge and skills to take medical histories, examine and treat patients, order and interpret laboratory tests and X-rays,

make diagnoses, and prescribe medications, as well as provide supportive counseling and health education to patients and their families. ITPs are extremely interested in this position as it is the job that is closest to that of a physician and allows them to use a high level of their skills and knowledge.

Medical Office Assistant (front office and back rooms)

Many backgrounds of ITPs are prepared to work as medical assistants as they have excellent professional knowledge in medical terminology, interpersonal communication skills, and experience working with patients, families and other health care professionals. ITPs with excellent verbal and written skills are able to perform the medical office assistant job.

D) Links

Professional Associations

- Ontario Paramedic Association <http://www.ontarioparamedic.ca/>
- Paramedic Association of Canada <http://www.paramedic.ca/>
- Ontario Medical Secretaries Association <http://www.omsa-hca.org/>
- American Academy of Physician Assistants <http://www.aapa.org/geninfo1.html>

Related Web Sites

- Superior North Emergency Medical Services
<http://www.thunderbay.ca/ems/index.cfm?fuse=html&pg=748>
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC)
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/ambul/ehs_mn.html
- For information on Physician Assistants in Canada see <http://www.aipso.ca/img-canada/careers/furthering-studies.htm#faq>
- For an excellent detailed breakdown of skills and complexity levels according to the following criteria see the HRSD web site: <http://www15.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/english/profiles/206.asp>