

The BCAS 10-7 Association Society is a group of 274 retired BC Ambulance Service professionals. Our membership is comprised of trailblazers in BC's Emergency Medical Services including Paramedics, Managers, Emergency Dispatchers and Support Staff. Our years of experience and broad understanding of BC Ambulance Service mandate and history make us subject matter experts in the complex field of pre-hospital care and emergency management in BC. We have watched with concern over the past weeks, months and years as the BC Ambulance Service has been neglected and mismanaged to the point of imminent failure and are compelled to speak out today.

The BC Ambulance Service was established in 1974 to provide comprehensive and effective emergency medical services for all residents of British Columbia. Through dedicated first responders and effective leadership BCAS became a world-renowned emergency service, emulated by many both within Canada and abroad. It is distressing to witness the degradation of the service that we were a part of building and once proud of. It is important to note that the service breakdown that unfolded over the course of the recent heatwave did not suddenly happen over the past week. There has been a systematic dismantling of BCAS starting in 2010 with the removal of the Emergency Health Services Commission, an arm's length branch of the Ministry of Health.

The government placed the service under the umbrella of the Provincial Health Services Authority, an organization with no experience in pre-hospital emergency services. The entire operational structure was dismantled, and the experienced Operational Managers and leaders were replaced with health care administrators. The costs of these so called "labour adjustments" soared into hundreds of thousands of dollars in severance and legal costs. The loss of operational expertise was immeasurable. Following these "adjustments" the number of non-operational staff skyrocketed as much as 10-fold, while the workload of emergency responders was stretched beyond capacity. The physical and mental health of Paramedics and Dispatchers plummeted yet the senior administrative staff appeared to be more focused on "changing the culture" of proud Paramedics rather than advancing a strong, resilient, and cost-

effective emergency service for the citizens of BC.

We have watched our colleagues suffer through these ill-conceived, damaging changes. The unimaginably long waits for service and negative patient outcomes as a result of a poorly managed system are inexcusable. We say enough is enough. The citizens of BC deserve better. The hard-working, caring, and dedicated Paramedics and Dispatchers deserve better. We call on the Minister of Health to take immediate action and restore the BC Ambulance Service to the efficient provincial service that it was designed to be. Provide adequate funding and support to attract and retain talented paramedics and dispatchers. Consult with the expertise within the ranks of BCAS to identify deficiencies and solutions. Trim the unnecessary and costly non-operational staff and redirect those funds back to front line care. And above all, show respect and compassion to your front-line workers who have endured years of neglect through dysfunctional decision making by unqualified leaders in senior management.

The BCAS 10-7 Association/Society offers our support in finding solutions to secure a healthy future for the BC Ambulance Service, the Paramedics and Dispatchers who proudly serve, and the people of British Columbia.