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Dear EMS members of MAHCP.

At approximately 6:45 am on August 28, 2012, an ambulance from Swan River drove off the road near Neepawa. The two Paramedics were returning to their station after a patient transfer to Winnipeg. Fortunately no one was injured in this accident. The Leadership and members and staff of the MAHCP would like to extend our thoughts and hopes that the Paramedics involved are able to recover from this accident. We remain deeply concerned that this sort of accident will repeat itself.

When the MAHCP and our EMS members presented a scheduling model and worked with the Employer to refine the model, the end result is that today the majority of Paramedics in the former South Eastman and former Nor-Man Regional Health Authorities are now full or part time employees. This has resulted in a better and more reliable service. We are also seeing a more stable workforce which is less affected by fatigue due to long hours of work and excessive periods of on-call.

Prior to MAHCP becoming aware of this accident, we had already secured meetings with Gerry Delorme, Executive Director Health Emergency Management Manitoba Health. During these meetings, the issue of excessive shift lengths and on-call hours will be at the forefront. It is beyond unfortunate that an incident like this has occurred, but it underscores just how important this issue is to EMS personnel as well as the general public.

MAHCP has also recently had an EMS member present a briefing personally to the Minister of Health. Topics covered in the brief include continued long hours of work, limiting hours of work without increased staffing to ensure continued service, limited access to Advanced Medical Care in Manitoba, equipment issues, and disparities in training requirements.

If any member has any questions about the accident, or the MAHCP's continuing efforts to advocate for the safety and quality of Manitoba's Paramedics, please do not hesitate to contact us at 204-772-0425 or toll-free at 1-800-315-3331.

Wendy Despins, MLT
President, MAHCP