

May 14, 2010

EMS Awareness Week salutes service commitment

EDMONTON – EMS Awareness Week – May 16 to 22, 2010 – honours the EMS profession and thanks the men and women providing this invaluable public service for the vital work they do each and every day. The week also offers an opportunity to better understand the importance of EMS within our health care system.

This year's international theme for EMS Week – "*EMS: Anytime. Anywhere. We'll Be There.*" – symbolizes the commitment EMS personnel make to the communities they serve. Their dedication to this mission ensures round-the-clock emergency medical response and care.

Although primarily associated with ambulances, EMS is really a system of dedicated professionals who provide timely and appropriate medical care to sick and injured people. Beginning with the initial emergency call for help, Alberta's EMS system includes Emergency Medical Dispatchers, Inter-facility Transportation, community-based First Responders, as well as EMS Practitioners in ground and air transport ambulances.

EMS providers across the province will be celebrating EMS Awareness Week in a variety of ways. Please contact your local EMS to find out more information and activities being planned.

About Alberta Health Services' EMS

There are over 550 ambulances across Alberta, of which almost 300 are Alberta Health Services (AHS) ambulances. The remaining 250 are owned and operated by approximately 50 service providers supplying ground ambulance services under contract with AHS.

Approximately 3,000 EMS practitioners are projected to attend 400,000 ambulance calls this year. More than 40 per cent of the projected calls will be inter-facility transfer calls where a patient is transferred from one health care facility to another. The other 60 per cent are 9-1-1 calls for emergency medical services.

Fixed wing air ambulance is conducted by 12 providers contracted by AHS. STARS has an affiliation agreement with AHS to provide dedicated rotary air ambulance service from bases in Calgary, Edmonton and Grande Prairie.

The effective coordination of all emergency medical services (ground emergency, ground inter-facility, air and dispatch) to ensure safe, high-quality and timely emergency medical care is Alberta Health Services' EMS unwavering goal.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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