President’s Message: Thank you

Friends and Colleagues,
I want to start off June’s message with a “Thank You.” Thank you to the 2,758 of you who filled out the 2017 Member Survey. Surveys are one way for us to understand what we need to change and what we are doing right. Your input is crucial to the success of the College, and ergo; to the success of the profession.

Another vital way you can have input into the College is by participating in the upcoming Council election vote. Council is tasked with governing our profession, which includes ensuring the development of policies and strategies to meet our responsibilities under the HPA; and the appropriate fees and budget to do so. For the 2017 upcoming elections, we have four candidates to fill three, three-year terms and one, one-year term.

The election of Council is a key component to our self-regulation. In Alberta we enjoy self-regulation under the Health Professions Act (HPA), meaning that paramedics are permitted, by government, to elect practitioners to govern and make decisions on behalf of the profession. This privilege of self-regulation aligns us with the 30 other health professions in the province. In this, we are one of only three provinces in Canada who can say they are afforded this level of recognition and accountability in the healthcare landscape.

When it comes to self-regulation, phrases like “protecting the public” are often mentioned when discussing the importance and need to regulate health disciplines. Unfortunately, this can be misleading and give a false impression that the public is being protected from the skilled, qualified people regulated by legislation.

In fact, regulation of health disciplines protects the public from anyone who could call themselves a paramedic, dentist, nurse, or any other healthcare provider if that regulation did not exist.

What can often be missed is the many other ways health regulation also protects the practitioners and their profession; in addition to the public. Legislation ensures that only those who continue to meet specific competencies are able to provide services to patients; through this the reputation of our profession is upheld. The College was recently asked to provide an article on the benefits of self-regulation that will soon be published in an upcoming issue of Ambulance Today.

On an ongoing basis, our regulation continues to serve our patients and profession by ensuring we can confidently say that we, paramedics, provide qualified, competent care to Albertans. On behalf of Council, I can say without reservation that we feel honoured, humbled and proud of our role in ensuring our profession continues to be able to serve Albertans to the best of our abilities.
In this issue of the *Pulse* you will see that the confirmed candidates have been identified for the 2017 Council Elections. Please review their bios and get to know them before the vote opens in August.

In service,

Pete Helfrich, President  
Alberta College of Paramedics
Posted: June 15, 2017