

### NRA 60 declined again

In June 2009 OMERS Sponsorship Corporation reviewed a proposal to give paramedics the ability to negotiate the right to retire at the age of 60. The proposal was voted down by OMERS. SEIU will continue the fight to ensure paramedics have the right to retire at the age of 60, just like other emergency professionals, such as police officers and firefighters.

### Paramedicine 2009

SEIU paramedics will be attending Paramedicine 2009, the Ontario Paramedic Association's annual educational conference on Nov. 21-22. The conference will profile latest research and best practices in paramedicine, including treating hostile patients, mentoring, community medicine, pediatric trauma, factors influencing clinical performance, and much more. For more information, visit their website at [www.paramedicine.ca](http://www.paramedicine.ca).

### Hospital Paramedics bargaining principles

SEIU's Provincial Paramedic Committee has several bargaining principles submitted for consideration during hospitals contract bargaining. Paramedics covered under the central hospital contract will have their issues bargained during local bargaining, which is underway now. The top bargaining priorities are:

- Enact NRA 60 for all paramedics in Ontario
- Raise standards and implement common language for all collective agreements
- Standardization of equipment for all paramedics



A paramedic suiting up a child with a bicycle helmet.

# Operation BrainSave

More than 50 children in Canada die every year from bicycle accidents. What makes these deaths especially tragic is that 75% of these deaths could have been prevented if victims had simply worn a bicycle helmet.

That's why SEIU paramedics are launching Operation BrainSave, a campaign that encourages children to wear bicycle helmets.

Kids commonly complain that helmets are hot, uncomfortable, and are worried that their friends will call them "dorky".

But SEIU paramedics are on alert and are giving children some great kid-friendly incentives for wearing a helmet. And it is working!

SEIU paramedics launched Operation BrainSave in Kapaskasing

and Hearst. EMS professionals in the region were on the lookout for kids wearing helmets while they were riding their bicycles. Children wearing helmets were given coupons for McDonalds, Canadian Tire and other popular stores.

**"Many serious head injuries can be avoided if kids wear their bicycle helmets."**

Andrew Snowden  
Paramedic, Timiskaming

"We decided to use a carrot instead of a stick," said Robert Keating an SEIU paramedic from northern Ontario. "We want to give kids a good, positive reason to wear their helmets."

Not surprisingly, the number of kids wearing helmets skyrocketed.

SEIU's paramedic committee will launch Operation BrainSave across all SEIU paramedic units in the summer of 2010. For info contact Barry Smith at 905-660-1800 ext 3003 or [b.smith@seiolocal1.org](mailto:b.smith@seiolocal1.org).

## Recertification policy needs review and reform

Many paramedics find the recertification process gruelling.

Sometimes paramedics who have many years of work experience and an excellent record would rather retire or find a new job than face the recertification process.

Every year paramedics in Ontario have to recertify to prove that they are still doing their job properly.

Most other health care and emergency professionals are not required to recertify every year.

So why do paramedics?

"They ask the most detailed and tedious questions on the exam," said Ched Zivic, a paramedic from Haldimand County near Hamilton.

"I know my job by heart, but these exams ask me to regurgitate these steps and it's frustrating."

Other health care professionals who have equal or more responsibility in

safeguarding the health of patients, such as nurses, doctors, surgeons, are not required to recertify annually.

The most puzzling aspect about recertification is the lack of standardization. The exam differs from employer to employer.

### Is a College the answer?

One way to correct the existing recertification process is to create a College of Paramedicine that will regulate paramedic professionals like other health care workers properly.

"The College of Nurses has done an excellent job in boosting the profile of nurses," said Robert Keating, an SEIU paramedic from Kapuskasing.

Instead of recertifying in an ad hoc manner, the SEIU Provincial Paramedic Committee recommends the process be done with clarity, efficiency and professionalism in a way that protects the rights of the patient and the paramedic.



## Many EMS awards to choose from



The EMS Exemplary Service Medal

Many paramedics in Ontario are eligible to win many different awards for outstanding performance on the job. Some of them include:

**N.H. McNally Award of Bravery** recognizes acts of bravery by EMS professionals in the performance of their duties. It is not an annual award, and is only presented based on merit.

**The Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award** is given to a paramedic who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and has made significant contributions to paramedicine in Ontario.

For more information on these two awards please visit their website at [www.emsontario.ca](http://www.emsontario.ca).

**EMS Exemplary Service Medal.** This award recognizes paramedics who have performed their duties in an exemplary manner, characterized by good conduct, industry and efficiency. Eligible members must have 20 years of experience working as a paramedic. For more information, please visit [www.gg.ca](http://www.gg.ca).

Are you a paramedic who has an interesting story to tell? Would you like to write a story in SEIU Paramedic? Just send an email to [g.dwulit@seiuocal1.org](mailto:g.dwulit@seiuocal1.org) and tell us what you want heard.

## Focus on YOU



A Haldimand EMS ambulance

### Haldimand County EMS

- Haldimand EMS has 28 full-time and 29 part-time paramedics using three 24-hour and one 12-hour vehicles to service a mixed urban and rural population of 44,000 people.
- Haldimand's catchment area includes Caledonia, Hagersville, Cayuga, Jarvis and Dunnville.
- Haldimand paramedics are frequently called in to service their neighbours in Hamilton, Brantford, Six Nations Reserve and Niagara.
- Haldimand paramedics are active in community programs including EMS Bike Medics, CPR training in partnership with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Public Access Defib Program, Car Seat Technical Program, EMS Week Promotion and Awareness, Operation Christmas Child, and 911 Education at local schools.

### PARAMEDIC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dwayne Cottel  
Lambton County EMS

Robert Keating  
Sensenbrenner EMS

David Kennedy  
Dufferin County EMS

Andrew Snowdon  
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