For Immediate Release
2016HLTH0030-000663
April 27, 2016

VICTORIA – Health Minister Terry Lake has announced the 73 rural and remote B.C.
communities that will welcome community paramedicine, a program that offers residents
enhanced health services from paramedics.

“The Community Paramedicine Initiative is a key component of our plan to improve access to
primary health-care services in rural B.C.,” Lake said. “By building upon the skills and
background of paramedics, we are empowering them to expand access to care for people who
live in rural and remote communities, helping patients get the care they need closer to home.”

The program is just one way the Province is working to enhance the delivery of primary care
services to British Columbians. The services provided may include checking blood pressure,
assisting with diabetic care, helping to identify fall hazards, medication assessment, post-injury
or illness evaluation, and assisting with respiratory conditions.

Under this program, paramedics will provide basic health-care services, within their scope of
practice, in partnership with local health-care providers. The enhanced role is not intended to
replace care provided by health professionals such as nurses, but rather to complement and
support the work these important professionals do each day, delivered in non-urgent settings,
in patients’ homes or in the community.

“As a former BC Ambulance paramedic, I understand the potential benefits of community
paramedicine,” said Jordan Sturdy, MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky. “Expanding the role of
paramedics to help care for the health and well-being of British Columbians just makes sense.”

Community paramedicine broadens the traditional focus of paramedics on pre-hospital
emergency care to include disease prevention, health promotion and basic health-care
services. This means a paramedic will visit rural patients in their home or community, perform
assessments requested by the referring health-care professional, and record their findings to
be included in the patient’s file. They will also be able to teach skills such as CPR at community
clinics.

“Community paramedics will focus on helping people stay healthy and the specific primary care
needs of the people in these communities,” said Linda Lupini, executive vice president, BC
Emergency Health Services. “This program also allows us to enhance our ability to respond to
medical emergencies by offering permanent employment to paramedics in rural and remote
areas of the province.”

“Community paramedicine brings improved patient care and more career opportunities to rural
and remote areas,” said Bronwyn Barter, president, Ambulance Paramedics of BC (CUPE 873).
“Paramedics are well-suited to take on this important role in health-care provision.”

Community paramedicine was initially introduced in the province in 2015 in nine prototype communities. The initiative is now expanding provincewide, and will be in place in 31 communities in the Interior, 18 communities in northern B.C., 19 communities on Vancouver Island, and five communities in the Vancouver coastal area this year.

At least 80 new full-time equivalent positions will support the implementation of community paramedicine, as well as augment emergency response capabilities. Positions will be posted across the regional health authorities. The selection, orientation and placement process is expected to take about four months.

Community paramedics are expected to be delivering community health services in northern B.C. this fall, in the Interior in early 2017, on Vancouver Island and the Vancouver coastal area in the spring of 2017.

BC Emergency Health Services has been co-ordinating the implementation of community paramedicine in B.C. with the Ministry of Health, regional health authorities, the Ambulance Paramedics of BC (CUPE 873), the First Nations Health Authority and others.

Learn more:

www.bcehs.ca/our-services/programs-services/community-paramedicine

Media Contacts:

Kristy Anderson
Media Relations Manager
Ministry of Health
250 952-1887 (media line)

Preet Grewal
Communications Officer
BC Emergency Health Services
778 679-5641
Community Paramedicine Initiative – Communities

There will be 73 rural and remote communities participating in the community paramedicine initiative, including the eight prototype communities, which began implementation in 2015.

Island Health region (19 communities):

- Alert Bay
- Cortes Island*
- Denman Island (incl. Hornby Island)
- Gabriola Island
- Galiano Island
- Gold River
- Mayne Island
- Pender Island
- Port Alice
- Port Hardy*
- Port Renfrew
- Port McNeill
- Quadra Island
- Sayward
- Sointula
- Tahsis
- Tofino*
- Ucluelet*
- Zeballos

Northern Health region (18 communities):

- Atlin
- Chetwynd*
- Dease Lake
- Fraser Lake
- Fort St. James*
- Granisle
- Haida Gwaii
- Hazelton*
- Houston
- Hudson's Hope
- Mackenzie
• McBride
• Kitwanga
• Southside
• Stewart
• Tumbler Ridge
• Valemount
• Wells

Interior Health region (31 communities):

• Alexis Creek
• Anahim Lake
• Blue River
• Clearwater
• Clinton
• Creston*
• Edgewood
• Elkford
• Field
• Fruitvale
• Gold Bridge
• Golden
• Greenwood
• Kaslo
• Keremeos
• Lilooet
• Logan Lake
• Lumby
• Lytton
• Midway
• Nakusp
• New Denver
• Princeton*
• Revelstoke
• Riondel
• Rossland
• Salmo
• Seton Portage
• Sicamous
• Sparwood
• Winlaw

Vancouver Coastal region (5 communities):

• Bella Bella
• Bella Coola
• Bowen Island
• Madeira Park
• Texada Island
* Indicates a prototype community

**Media Contacts:**

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