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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
Emergency and Health Services Commission

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL ASSISTANTS EDUCATION FUND**

VICTORIA – The Emergency and Health Services Commission (EHSC) has contributed \$3 million to establish Vancouver Foundation’s Emergency Medical Assistants Education Fund. The purpose of the fund is to defray license upgrade costs incurred by emergency medical assistants.

The fund is available to upgrade Occupational First Aid (OFA) attendants as well as Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) to the Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) level of practice. These people work in industrial and workplace settings, on ski-patrols, rescue organizations and with the BC Ambulance Service (BCAS). The funding is also available to upgrade PCPs to the Advanced Care Paramedic (ACP) level in B.C.

“The Emergency Medical Assistants Education Fund will help to improve pre-hospital patient care,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “The new \$3-million bursary is one of a number of strategies underway to improve professional skills, including those of paramedics, in rural and remote areas of B.C. Other strategies BCAS has used to recruit paramedics include campaigns targeting communities that have had ongoing hiring challenges.”

Anyone trained as an OFA, EMR or PCP who has lived in B.C. for more than one year is eligible for a bursary; however, preference for PCP training will be given to candidates living in smaller communities. Up to 60 candidates a year are expected to benefit from the bursary.

“Better trained emergency medical responders mean that patients will receive a higher level of care,” said Sue Conroy, chief operating officer for the BCAS. “The bursary is a win-win for patients, as well as another recruitment and retention initiative to attract candidates to pursue and further their career as a paramedic.”

The cost to an individual to complete the course work required can exceed \$10,000 for a PCP license and up to \$25,000 for an ACP license. The bursary awards will be aimed at relieving approximately half of these costs for each individual.

Vancouver Foundation is Canada’s largest community foundation. Its mission is to create positive and lasting impacts in communities throughout British Columbia. As the administrator of this new education fund, the Foundation will be responsible for providing further details on how to apply and eligibility criteria, as well as how to donate to the Fund. The information will be available in the coming months on the Foundation’s website at [www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca).

Information about becoming a paramedic or dispatcher is available on the BCAS website at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/bcas/careers/](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/bcas/careers/).

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