

Integrating community paramedicine topics into degree-level paramedic education programs

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BACKGROUND

- Community paramedicine addresses the needs of diverse and often under-served communities and individuals with a wide range of social and chronic disease needs
- Community paramedics have often adopted knowledge, skills, and behaviours characteristic of primary healthcare professionals
- Paramedics sometimes lack access to affordable higher education that would enable them to practice autonomously as clinicians and practitioners alongside other health professionals

AIM

To develop an educational framework to support the integration of community paramedicine topics into degree-level education programs

Public Health, Cultural Competence, Personal Safety & Wellness

[these are]... *foundation concept[s] that should apply to all paramedic providers (not just CP's) and should have been already addressed through undergraduate education ...* (Expert Panellist)

FINDINGS

- The educational framework (Fig. 1) is focused on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are relevant to community paramedicine that can be integrated into Paramedicine Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees
- Support from the majority of our expert panel members for an integrated curriculum
- Estimated that approximately half of the suggested community paramedic topics are already integrated into paramedicine Bachelor degree programs (higher load and depth)
- These suggested topics will equip graduates with the capabilities to practice as interprofessional clinicians or practitioners in primary care settings across paramedic systems (Fig. 2)

Figure 1: Community Paramedic Educational Framework at Degree Level

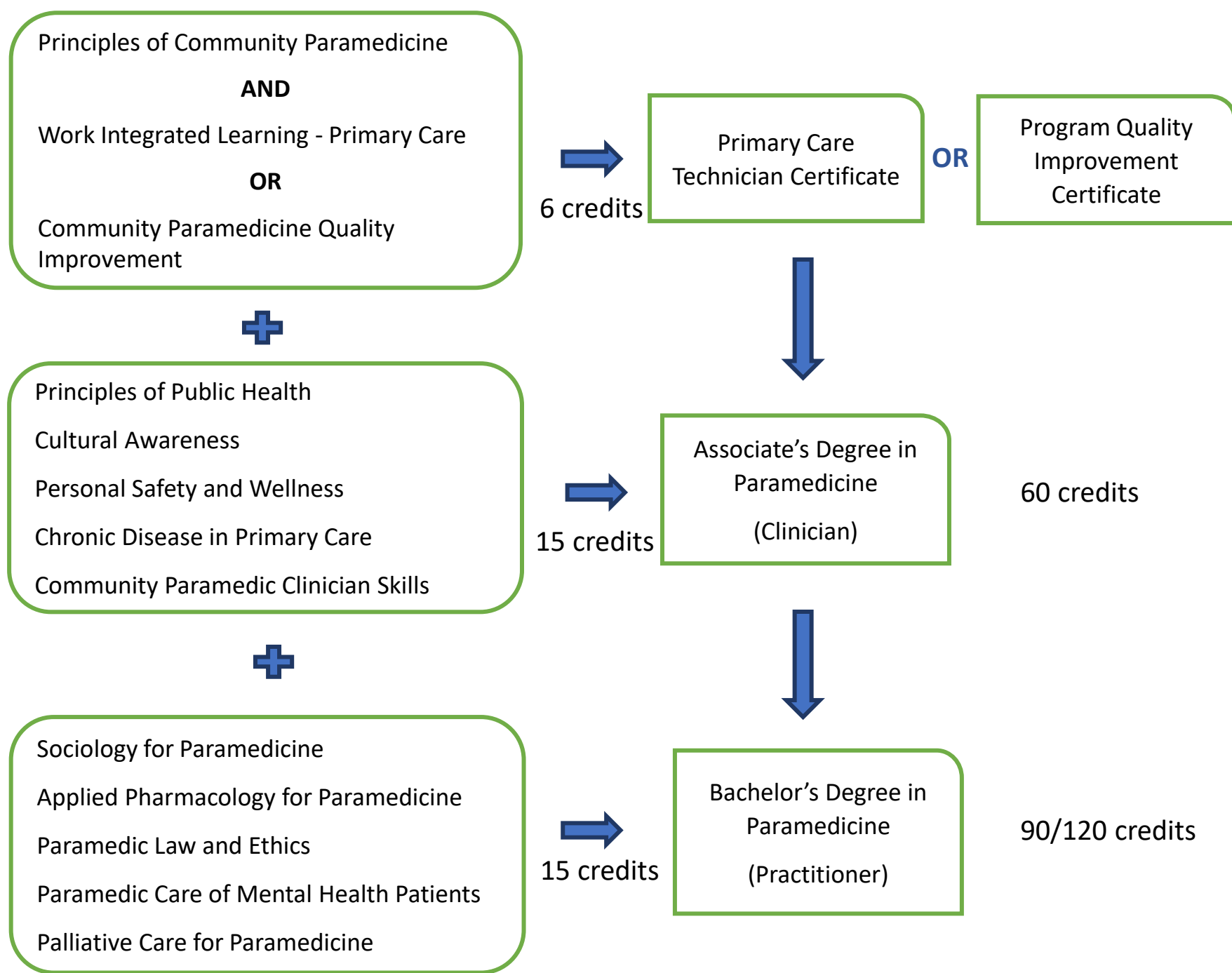
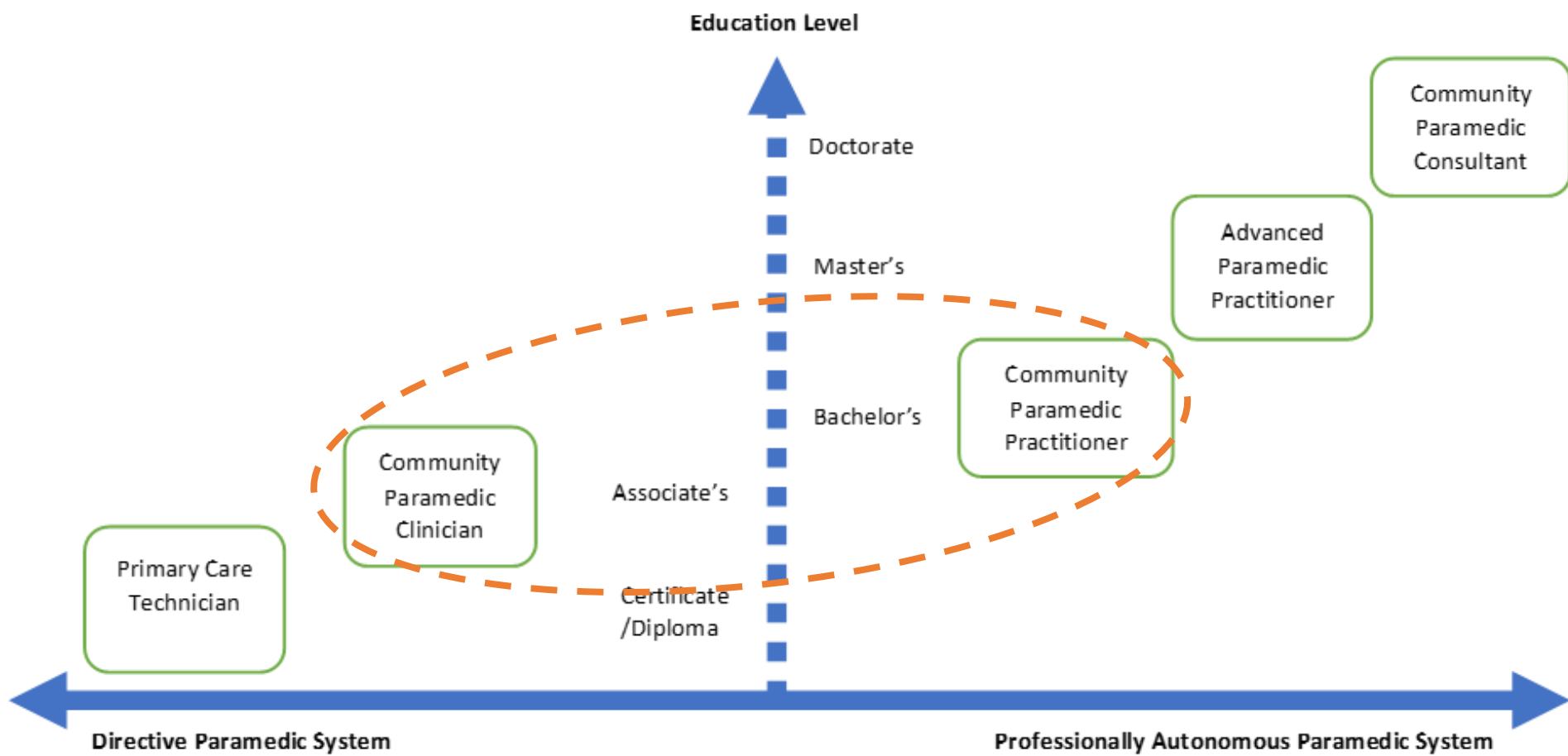


Figure 2: Link between CP roles and educational needs across systems



North American Backdrop

A national standard for associate and bachelor's college degrees should be designed specifically for paramedicine. These degrees should incorporate courses that promote soft skills, including, but not limited to, critical thinking, analysis, writing, and communication. (Egnatovich, p.163-4)

METHODS

- The overall role and capabilities expected of community paramedics as clinicians and practitioners guided this research
- The curriculum framework was designed through an examination of existing curricula, community paramedicine literature and questionnaire responses from two panels of expert paramedicine professionals drawn from countries where community paramedicine is established or emerging
- Purposely recruited expert panellists comprised of practicing community paramedics, students and educators, professional leaders, and subject matter experts

DISCUSSION

- Community paramedicine is a concept that has existed for over two decades
- Community paramedicine is ready to be integrated into mainstream paramedic education programs within the higher education system alongside other healthcare professionals

REFERENCES

O'Meara, P. Ahlers, Wingrove, G. 2024 *International Community Paramedic Curriculum: A Guide for Educators*. The Paramedic Network, Cincinnati.

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