

# 20<sup>th</sup> International Roundtable on Community Paramedicine, Quebec City, Canada.

*An International Community Paramedic  
Career Structure: a synthesis of the  
literature, regulatory frameworks, and  
community paramedicine expert advice*

Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024

PETER O'MEARA, Gary Wingrove, Mary Ahlers  
Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country



- Background
- Aim
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion
- Questions

## **Project Funders:**

*The SAAVIK Foundation & Paramedic Health Solutions*

## Background

- It is sometimes unclear where community paramedics fit within existing paramedicine career structures
- Their professional capabilities are often ill-defined or misunderstood, despite existing international definitions (Shannon, Baldry et al. 2023)
- Our underlying premise was that paramedicine is an evolving autonomous health discipline (Williams, Beovich et al. 2021)

## Community Paramedic Consensus Definition

*A community paramedic provides person-centred care in a diverse range of settings that address the needs of the community. Their practice may include provision of primary health care, health promotion, disease management, clinical assessment and needs based interventions. They should be integrated with interdisciplinary health care teams which aim to improve patient outcomes through education, advocacy, and health system navigation.*(Shannon, Baldry et al. 2023)

## Aim

- To develop a community paramedic career structure and descriptions of their professional capabilities

***NB. This research was an enabling component of a larger curriculum development project***

## Methods

- Synthesis of the paramedicine literature and key regulatory frameworks
- Input from a panel of international community paramedicine experts
- Thematic analysis of on-line questionnaire responses
- System modernization continuum (next slide) used to fashion community paramedic career structures and capabilities
- Final proposal tested with a second panel

## Anglo-American Prehospital Model

### **Directive Paramedic System**

A paramedic system reliant on the delegated medical practice of a physician medical director who provides clinical oversight and direction, and in which the process of professionalization, including self-regulation, national registration, and tertiary/university entry to practice standards are not fully established. This system is principally aligned with the public safety model of out of hospital care and has developed a service delivery strategy encompassing an emergency care model using traditional clinical roles in a scheduled and unscheduled care approach.

### **Professionally Autonomous Paramedic System**

A paramedic system encompassing a paramedic-led model of expertise which has undergone the process of professionalization, including self-regulation, national registration, and tertiary/ university entry to practice standards. This system has integrated into the local healthcare and public health system and has developed a service delivery strategy encompassing emergency, urgent and primary care models, delivered using traditional and non-traditional clinical roles in a scheduled and unscheduled care approach.

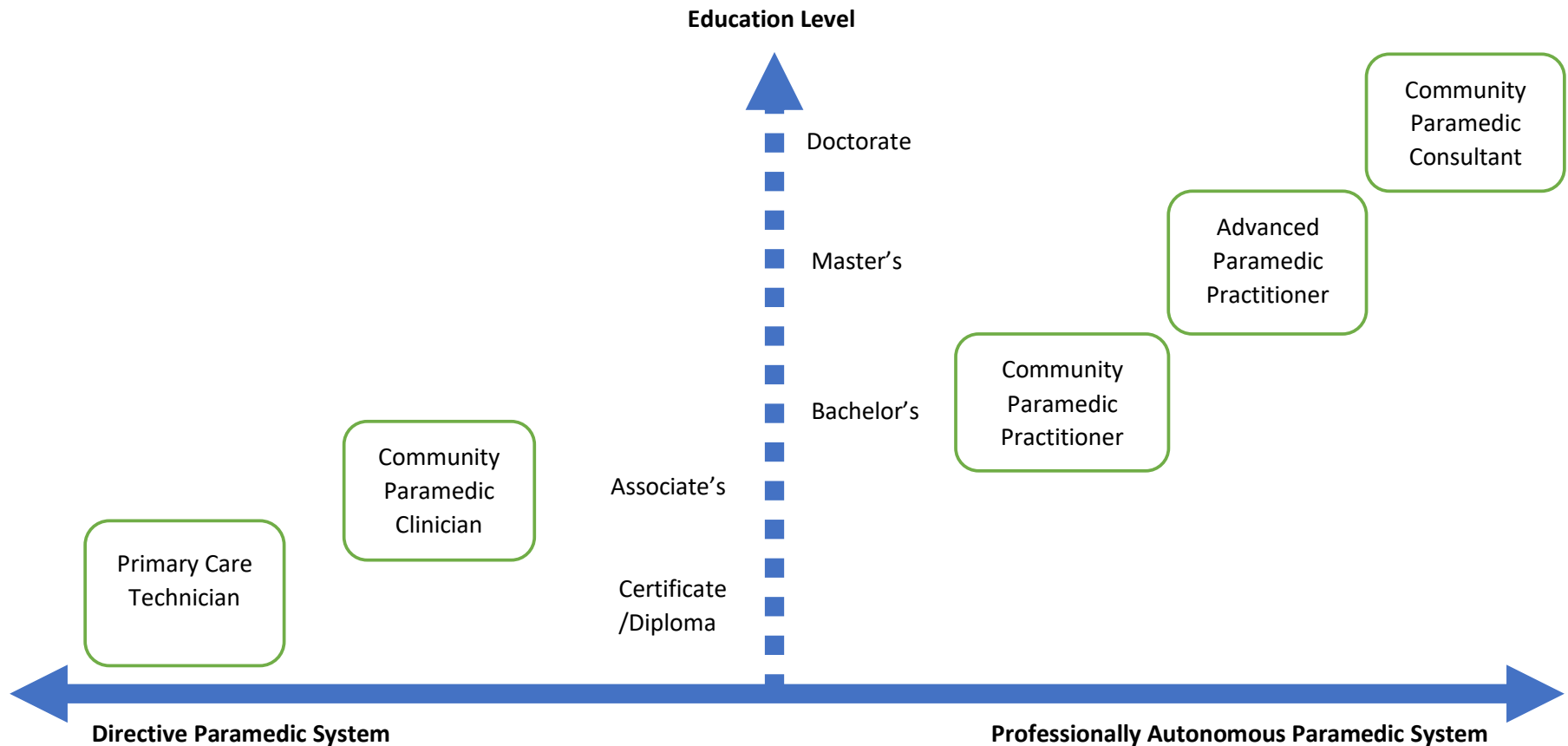
Definitions of Directive and Professionally Autonomous Paramedic Systems  
(Makrides, Ross et al. 2022)

## Findings

- A five-step career structure was developed
- Four themes identified from responses to a draft structure
- Conceptually separated into two distinct but related pathways to facilitate international comparability across paramedic systems (directive verses professionally autonomous systems)
- The structural and cultural characteristics are represented through professional capability statements and indicative education levels



## Proposed Career Structure(s)



## Emergent Themes

### 1. Policy and system issues

- This career structure cannot operate in a vacuum, with associated policy and system changes required to strengthen the career structure for paramedics in general

### 2. Career structure inclusions

- The majority suggested the adoption of two or three community paramedic levels, either through the elimination of the technician/clinician levels or the advanced paramedic practitioner/consultant levels

### 3. Advanced practitioner/speciality and consultant roles

- Dichotomy of views was difficult to reconcile within a single career structure and demanded a more nuanced approach

### 4. Capability statements

- There was strong support for all the suggested professional capability statements from panellist's individual perspectives

## **Primary Care Technician (Certificate Qualification)**

A Primary Care Technician (Community Paramedic) expands the role of the primary care paramedic (emergency medical technician) to provide health services where access to physicians, clinics, and/or hospitals is difficult or may not exist. This involves the application of knowledge and skills to connect underutilized resources to underserved populations through collaboration with local stakeholders. They have the capacity to follow a pre-existing care plan under the guidance of an appropriately qualified healthcare professional.

## **Community Paramedic Clinician (Associate's Degree Qualification)**

Community Paramedic Clinicians operate as the entry level community paramedics in some countries. They have the competencies and capabilities to practice as clinicians in a wide range of primary and urgent care settings. Community paramedic clinicians bring their core paramedic knowledge, skills, and behaviours together with additional community paramedicine related education and training to the health and social needs of their patients and communities.

## **Community Paramedic Practitioner (Bachelor's Degree Qualification)**

Community Paramedic Practitioners practice across a wide range of primary and urgent care settings. They have acquired, and continue to demonstrate, an enhanced knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, competence, and judgement in community paramedic practice.

## **Advanced Paramedic Practitioner (Master's Degree Qualification)**

Advanced Paramedic Practitioners bring high-level decision-making skills to patient care. Their skills and competencies are grounded in a thorough understanding of the pathophysiology of and therapeutic approaches to common illness and injury, in addition to models of primary, acute, and integrated care across the entirety of the healthcare system. The application of non-technical skills, complex reasoning, relationship building, communication and flexibility is of critical importance.

## **Community Paramedic Consultant (Doctoral Degree Qualification)**

Community Paramedic Consultants practice as paramedicine specialists across a wide range of primary and urgent care settings. They have acquired, and continue to demonstrate, an enhanced knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, competence, and judgement in community paramedic practice.

## Discussion

- Potential for attractive career structures improving paramedic retention in general
- Is there enough support amongst key stakeholders?
- If not, how do we garner the necessary support?

## Contact Details

□ Professor Peter O'Meara

- Email. [peter.omeara@monash.edu](mailto:peter.omeara@monash.edu)

## Look out for our publications from this project

- An International Community Paramedic Career Structure: a synthesis of the literature, regulatory frameworks, and community paramedicine expert advice. [under review]
- Integrating community paramedicine topics into degree-level paramedic education programs: a strategic-pragmatic approach. [draft stage]
- O'Meara, P. , M. Ahlers, and G. Wingrove. 2024. *International Community Paramedic Curriculum: A Guide for Educators*. Cincinnati: The Paramedic Network.

- [Amazon.com: INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC CURRICULUM: A Guide for Educators eBook : O'Meara, Peter, Ahlers, Mary, Wingrove, Gary: Kindle Store](#)

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC CURRICULUM: A Guide for Educators Kindle Edition

by Peter O'Meara (Author), Mary Ahlers (Author), Gary Wingrove (Author) | Format: Kindle Edition

Part of: Community Paramedic (1 books)

[See all formats and editions](#)

Community paramedicine has undergone significant evolution over the past two decades, leading to a shift towards more holistic roles within healthcare systems. There is a growing need for clearly defined roles and capabilities for community paramedics. International efforts have been made to develop a consensus definition for community paramedics and integrate community paramedicine education into mainstream paramedic programs.

The international community paramedic curriculum guide for educators builds upon collaborative efforts from experts and financial support from various organizations. It aims to align community paramedic career structures and curriculum with international standards, featuring professional capability statements and an integrated curriculum framework. The goal is to implement positive changes and address reform barriers at different levels to make this vision a reality.



Kindle  
**\$15.00**  
Available instantly

Paperback  
**\$15.00**

Other New from \$15.00 ▾

Kindle Price: **\$15.00**

Sold by: Amazon.com Services LLC

Buy now with 1-Click

By clicking the above button, you agree to the [Kindle Store Terms of Use](#).

Read with our free app  
[Deliver to your Kindle Library ▾](#)

## Key References

- Health Education England. 2019. *Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capability Framework*. London.  
<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Paramedic%20Specialist%20in%20Primary%20and%20Urgent%20Care%20Core%20Capabilities%20Framework.pdf>
- Makrides, Timothy., Linda. Ross, Cameron. Gosling, and Peter. O'Meara. 2020. "The Structure and Characteristics of Anglo-American Paramedic Systems in Developed Countries: A Scoping Review Protocol." *Australasian Journal of Paramedicine* 17, no. 1.
- Makrides, Timothy., Linda. Ross, Cameron. Gosling, Joseph. Acker, and Peter. O'Meara. 2022. "Defining Two Novel Sub Models of the Anglo-American Paramedic System: A Delphi Study." *Australasian Emergency Care* 25, no. 3: 229-234.
- Shannon, Brendan, Sascha Baldry, Peter O'Meara, Nicole Foster, Angela Martin, Matthew Cook, Karen Stewart, and Alecka Miles. 2023. "The Definition of a Community Paramedic: An International Consensus." *Paramedicine* 20, no. 1: 4-22.  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/27536386221148993>.
- Williams, Brett, Bronwyn Beovich, and Alexander Olausson. 2021. "The Definition of Paramedicine: An International Delphi Study." *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*: 3561-3570.