

EXCERPT FROM CURRENT SOPM DRAFT:

### **Academic Degree Requirements for Paramedics**

Consideration was given by the Expert Panel to calling for an associate degree as an entry-level education requirement for paramedics. Arguments in favor of this change include recognition of the complexity and sometimes ambiguity inherent to paramedic practice, increasing the professional recognition of paramedics, a logical pathway towards better compensation, and comparability with other health care professions. Arguments against this change include the challenges of integrating associate degree academic preparation into fire, hospital or other non-academic institution based programs. Concerns were voiced that increasing academic preparation requirements could increase the cost of education, shrink the hiring pool of paramedics for employers and threaten existing paramedic level service delivery programs. The Expert Panel considers this topic as a subject worthy of further national debate and exploration. While the group clearly recognizes education as the foundation of any profession's scope of practice, the difficulty of considering transitional variables such as grandfathering existing personnel and programs, workforce recruitment and retention, etc. were beyond the scope of this project.