

The Extended Care Paramedic (ECP) Program: An Innovative Approach to Sustainable Patient-Centred Care

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Background. A rise in the percentage of Canadians aged 65 and older is placing new demands on health care across Canada. Increased pressure on healthcare facilities often means lengthy emergency room wait times that impact older and frail patients most. The ECP program being piloted in Nova Scotia is an innovative response to this mounting strain – aiming to provide timely non-emergency and emergency services in nursing homes without unnecessary transfers to hospital.

Purpose. We explore the impact the ECP program has had on health care renewal in Nova Scotia by reducing consumption of the health care budget, decreasing emergency room congestion, and providing quality patient-centred care.

Methods. An impact evaluation was conducted through secondary data analysis; specifically, review of stakeholder and patient interviews, ECP preliminary data, as well as health authority strategic indicators.

Findings. Initial data demonstrated the program’s success in meeting its goals of reducing consumption of the health care budget, decreasing emergency room congestion, and providing timely, patient-centred care. Hospital admissions from nursing homes have dropped an average of 27% per month, surpassing the target of a 25% reduction.

Learning Objectives. Increased awareness of 1) opportunities for nursing students to participate in national health care renewal dialogue and 2) interdisciplinary approaches to innovative health care delivery.