

## Extended Care Paramedics

Extended Care Paramedics (ECPs) are highly skilled clinicians who work collaboratively with other health care professionals to manage and treat people in their residence. Although SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) operates the ECP program for all members of the community, it is particularly beneficial for people who live in residential aged care facilities.

### Who are ECPs?

SAAS ECPs are Intensive Care Paramedics who have completed specialised training, skills enhancement and placements. They are all registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

### How do patients benefit from this service?

ECPs attend patients who have called Triple Zero (000). An ECP is dispatched to the patient after an assessment has taken place, either by an ECP in the SAAS Emergency Operations Centre or a referral from a SAAS emergency crew.

ECPs provide alternative care pathways for patients, assist in providing appropriate choices for patients, and reducing unnecessary transport to hospital. Attendance by an ECP reduces the disruption to patients and their carers associated with a trip to hospital. If, after assessment, the patient still needs to go to hospital, the ECP will arrange this.

Patients receive tailored care and, if needed, will be managed in collaboration with other health professionals such as GPs, specialists and allied health care providers.

### When do they work?

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### What geographical areas do they cover?

Adelaide metropolitan and fringe areas as operationally required.

### What type of cases do ECPs attend?

- wound care including suturing and skin tears
- pain management, chronic pain (musculoskeletal)
- palliative care patients with break through pain and medical issues, including end of life care, usually in consultation with specialist palliative care teams
- gastroenteritis – diarrhoea and vomiting
- acute catheter issues/urinary tract infection/urinary retention
- replacement of urinary catheters – female, male and supra pubic with acute problems (not routine replacements)
- heat related issues in hot weather/dehydration
- infections – mild respiratory, urinary, cellulitis,
- PEG replacements (acute problems not routine replacements)
- dizziness and vertigo in previously diagnosed patients
- previously diagnosed recurrent migraine headaches
- appropriate epistaxis (monitored or not anticoagulated)
- review acute INR problems and treat/correct if required

- assisting in behavioural and medical management of dementia patients in residential care facilities, where appropriate.

### **Who do ECPs liaise with?**

- General and other medical practitioners
- RDNS and Focus Health
- Metro Home Link (home support services)
- Palliative care services
- Adelaide Plastic Surgery
- Sportsmed SA

### **What equipment do they have?**

The ECP vehicle cannot carry a patient, but they do carry special equipment and medication to assist patients including:

- normal emergency ambulance kits, 12 lead ECG
- procedures/equipment:
  - point of care testing using i-STAT machine,
  - biochemistry/electrolytes, lactate/venous blood gases, troponin I, INR
  - blood and other specimen collection (these are taken to IMVS for processing with the results sent to the patient's GP)
- suturing equipment, steri-strips and related closures, wound glue and extensive range of wound dressings
- ENT assessment - otoscope
- ring cutters for ring removal
- urinary catheters and PEGs

### **What medications do they have?**

- antibiotics – oral, IV
- bronchodilator puffers, spacers and peak flow meters
- analgesics – oral, IV, IN (including fentanyl, morphine, endone, panadeine forte, panadeine, paracetamol)
- NSAID – oral and suppository
- steroids – oral, IV
- a variety of antiemetics – oral, IV
- antispasmodic – oral
- anti-diarrhoea
- antihistamines – oral
- ADT (tetanus vaccine) post wound care where required
- Miconazole, Emla, Omeprazole, Ural, Gastrolyte

### **How to access an ECP?**

In an emergency call Triple Zero (000). An ECP will only be dispatched if the patient would benefit from this type of care.

Health care professionals and residential care facilities should call 1300 881 700 to request an ECP if the patient does not need an emergency ambulance.