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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## B.C.'s ambulance paramedics to have standalone bargaining rights restored

The B.C. government today announced that it is initiating a process which will restore standalone bargaining rights to B.C.'s ambulance paramedics and emergency dispatchers.

The move has the strong support of both the Ambulance Paramedics of BC (CUPE Local 873) and the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) which represents 11 unions in collective bargaining with B.C.'s public health employers.

CUPE Local 873 members were transferred into the FBA for the purpose of collective bargaining when the previous government moved the province's ambulance service from the Ministry of Health to the Provincial Health Services Authority in 2010.

"This move will strengthen our members' voice in advocating for strong emergency health services across B.C. while ensuring that the unique working conditions of ambulance paramedics and emergency dispatchers are recognized in the bargaining process," says CUPE Local 873 president Bronwyn Barter.

"I want to thank the FBA unions for their strong solidarity and support over the past seven years as we all faced attacks from the previous government. We remain committed to working with our fellow health unions on strengthening public health care to the benefit of all health care workers."

Hospital Employees' Union secretary-business manager Jennifer Whiteside, spokesperson for the FBA, says it's the right move for paramedics and dispatchers – and for facility-based health workers.

"CUPE Local 873 members are critical members of the health care team and the FBA unions have been pleased to support them at the bargaining table as B.C.'s ambulance service was transitioned from the health ministry to the Provincial Health Services Authority," says Whiteside.

"But the work of CUPE Local 873 members is fundamentally different from facility-based health care workers so this change is both appropriate and welcome."

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