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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health  
BC Ambulance Service

### **PARAMEDICS WIN SILVER MEDAL AT AUSTRALIAN CHALLENGE**

VICTORIA – A team of British Columbia’s Advanced Life Support (ALS) Paramedics have returned home from Queensland, Australia, after winning the Silver Medal at the Asia Pacific International Conference (APIC) simulation challenge.

“The Province and BC Ambulance Service are proud of Team Canada 2007’s achievement,” said George Abbott, Minister of Health. “Their hard work and dedication demonstrate not only their commitment to representing B.C.’s paramedics, but ultimately the high standard of patient care given by paramedics across British Columbia.”

Team Canada joined other international paramedics from countries, including Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States, to demonstrate the best of paramedic practice and excellence in the field. Only one point separated Team Canada 2007 from the winning team, San Diego.

“Team Canada 2007’s performance makes all of us with BC Ambulance Service very proud,” said Sue Conroy, chief operating officer of BCAS. “We appreciate their commitment to professional excellence in addition to the many hours of hard work and personal time they invested preparing for the competition.”

The team is a group of four Lower Mainland paramedics with more than 100 years of combined experience. Each member brings a unique skill set to the team. Andy Fletcher, an Advance Life Support (ALS) paramedic and district supervisor in Vancouver, is an expert on clinical skills; Rene Bernklau, a unit chief in Vancouver, specializes in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies, and John Richmond, an ALS paramedic in Richmond has significant air-ambulance experience. Clarke McGuire, team manager and also an ALS paramedic in Richmond, functioned as a spare having worked as a paramedic for over 33 years.

“The pressure was high because we were working under the Australian College of Ambulance Professionals procedures, drugs and protocols,” said McGuire. “The team put in a lot of training hours to become well versed in Australian practices.”

Teams dealt with all types of medical emergencies and were put through stressful simulations. One scene was set in the outback of Australia where a farmhouse had been raided by the Queensland police SWAT team. The area was not completely secured which meant that the first paramedic of the team had to work alone for the initial triage of two unconscious critical patients and one prisoner. Once the other two paramedics were allowed on site, there was a live explosion creating yet another burn patient. All together, they had four patients all across the farmyard with one set of equipment to share.

This level of competition is not new to the group. In 2005, the team placed first at the Rallye Rejviz International Medical Competition in the Czech Republic. There they competed against 32 teams, 28 of which included a doctor.

The team arrived back in Vancouver this week and were welcomed back by Abbott and Conroy, who presented the paramedics with special appreciation awards for their efforts representing BC Ambulance Service.

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