



PROGRAM POLICY

NUMBER: QPS 180

TITLE: Patch Communication

CATEGORY: Quality and Patient Safety

VERSION: 1.3

AUTHORITY: Program Director

LAST REVIEWED: July 2025

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1.0 Purpose

To establish a process for paramedics and Base Hospital Physicians to engage in Online Medical Consultation (patching), ensuring adherence to provincial standards and promoting safe, effective communication.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all certified paramedics within RPPEO and Base Hospital Physicians providing online medical consultation in accordance with the ALS PCS, BLS PCS, and Performance Agreement.

3.0 Definitions

Patch: Online Medical Consultation initiated by a paramedic for clinical guidance.

Patch Failure: When a paramedic is unable to reach a BHP for medical direction due to factors not related to cellular coverage or equipment failure.

Base Hospital Physician (BHP): A physician credentialed by RPPEO to provide online medical consultation in accordance with the Performance Agreement.

4.0 Background

RPPEO provides online medical support for out-of-hospital care to promote high-quality clinical decision-making. Patching supports paramedics in the provision of care, and forms part of the oversight provided by the Base Hospital Program.

5.0 Policy

RPPEO will provide paramedics with access to a system of Online Medical Consultation to communicate with a Base Hospital Physician (BHP) in accordance with applicable standards. Paramedics will follow the communication process using regionally established tools.

6.0 Procedure

6.1 Paramedics will patch to the BHP by phone or radio as directed by CACC.

6.2 Paramedics and BHPs will confirm identifying information.

6.3 Paramedics will use the SBARR format to initiate the patch.

6.4 Verbal orders will be repeated back, documented on the ACR, and followed unless justified in remarks.

6.5 The patch number will be recorded on the ACR.



6.6 BHPs will complete a patch form by the end of their shift.

6.7 In case of patch failure:

- a) Attempt landline contact without delaying transport.
- b) Transport to the appropriate facility.
- c) Document the incident on the ACR and complete a Patch Failure Report.

6.8 A semi-annual report on patch failures will be submitted to the RPPEO Senior Management Team.

6.9 Only credentialed Base Hospital Physicians may provide online medical direction.

7.0 Base Hospital Physician Role

Base Hospital Physicians must:

- Hold appropriate qualifications;
- Participate in orientation;
- Be familiar with RPPEO directives and patch procedures;
- Provide advice/orders to certified paramedics;
- Complete documentation and participate in feedback processes.

Emergency medicine residents may participate under supervision.

8.0 Related Policies / Legislation

- Regional Base Hospital Performance Agreement, MOHLTC – May 2008
- Advanced Life Support Patient Care Standards
- RPPEO QPS 120 – Call Review
- RPPEO Patch Failure Form
- Patch Failure Report

REVISION RECORD:

Version #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	August 2016	Merged with CLI-140 and changed title to “Patching and Radio Communication...”
1.0	September 2016	Removed duplication of “patch failure” procedures, addition of BHP Role and Responsibilities.
1.1	February 20, 2019	Added that RPPEO will maintain an out-of-hospital Online Medical Control process. Reworded to include RPPEO’s support and procedures set in place to help paramedics contact the BHP, rather than just outline when a paramedic should patch.
1.2	June 12, 2023	Made changes to reflect electronic documentation, Online Medical Consultation
1.3	July 7, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formatting and section structure aligned with current RPPEO standards• Added definitions section for clarity



		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removed internal classification no longer supported by TOH• No substantive changes made
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