

Charlottetown Area Office, 100 Capital Drive, Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1E7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23rd, 2010

**PEI Paramedics (CUPE Local 3324)
Will Meet with Minister Bertram to Discuss Speed Cap Policy
this Thursday, March 25th at 10 a.m.**

Charlottetown – “The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3324 is pleased to report that the Minister of Health & Wellness, Carolyn Bertram, has agreed to meet with our representatives to discuss our concerns regarding the speed cap policy implemented recently by Island EMS Inc.,” says Bill McKinnon, CUPE National Representative.

CUPE represents approximately 100 Paramedics across Prince Edward Island working for Island EMS Inc. This policy prevents ambulances (with lights and sirens on), from travelling more than 10 kms over the speed limit, where the limit is 60 kms or less (and only two lanes of traffic), and only 20 kms over the speed limit, to a maximum of 120 kms /hr, when travelling on the highway.

“The Island EMS Policy, in our view, dangerously restricts Paramedic employees - members of CUPE Local 3324 – in their ability to respond quickly and safely to medical emergencies for Prince Edward Islanders. Furthermore, this policy completely removes all professional discretion from the hands of our trained Paramedics. The Employer suggests that there is some safety reason for implementing this speed restriction on ambulances. Yet against our best efforts, we could not find, nor could the Employer provide, a single record of an ambulance being involved in a motor vehicle accident on PEI, which was a direct result of excessive speed, during an emergency response.

Regardless of what the Minister’s previously and publicly stated position may have been on this issue, we are looking forward to finally having the opportunity to bring the Paramedic’s perspective to the Minister for her information and consideration,” concluded McKinnon.

Representatives of the Paramedics Local will be available for comment upon completion of the meeting, at approximately 10:45-11:00 am. The meeting itself will be taking place at the Minister’s office at 105 Rochford Street, Shaw North 4th Floor.

**For more information/or an interview, please contact:
Bill McKinnon at 566-4006 or (902) 439-1055**