



Prehospital Evidence-based Practice Program

**Dalhousie University,
Department of Emergency Medicine, Division of EMS**

Terms of Reference
Final Version



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Version

These Terms of Reference were adopted **November 29, 2023**.

The approved Terms of Reference are posted on the [PEP website](#).

BACKGROUND & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NAME

Prehospital Evidence-based Practice Program (PEP)

PREAMBLE

The **Prehospital Evidence-based Practice Program** launched in 1998. Originally, physicians from Dalhousie University, the QEII Health Sciences Centre and the IWK Children's & Women's Hospital in Halifax served as appraisers. Since then, the appraiser group has expanded to include a multidisciplinary group of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) professionals from across Canada and internationally. This program was developed to collect, appraise and synthesize the growing body of evidence generalizable to the EMS setting.

VISION

The Prehospital Evidence-based Practice (PEP) Program is the foremost evidence resource informing Emergency Medical Services.

MISSION

Using systematic approaches, PEP collects and synthesizes EMS-relevant research in an open-access format. PEP informs EMS clinical care and system decisions, shortening the knowledge-to-practice gap, and stimulating growth in EMS research.

GOALS

1. To catalog EMS and paramedicine studies.
2. To stimulate debate and growth towards evidence-based practice.
3. To be a resource for the development of EMS and paramedicine clinical guidelines.
4. To highlight gaps and recognize opportunities for EMS and paramedicine research.
5. To develop a process of using evidence to evaluate practice change suggestions.
6. To provide mentorship in evidence-based practice and critical appraisal.

VALUES

1. EMS community engagement.
2. Fostering evidence-based practice culture in EMS.
3. Collaboration
4. Mentorship

SCOPE

PEP serves as an international knowledge translation program aimed at fostering collaboration among the EMS community. PEP informs practice and identifies research gaps through systematized collection and review of EMS related literature.

PEP provides “state of the evidence” reviews, rapid reviews, or systematic reviews based on select high priority PICO (Population-Intervention-Comparison-Outcome) questions.

PEP activities are guided by an international stakeholder community. The priorities of PEP are determined by the needs of the EMS and paramedicine community.

PEP STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

PEP is a program of the Division of EMS in the Department of Emergency Medicine, Dalhousie University.

PEP is comprised of the:

- Primary Appraiser Team
- Senior Appraiser Team
- Decision Editor Team
- Senior Editorial Team

PRIMARY APPRAISER TEAM

This is the international team of paramedics, EMS physicians, nurses, and other professionals interested in promoting the goals of PEP. **Primary Appraisers** are the backbone of achieving the PEP goals through primary appraisal of included studies in the PEP repository. Membership is open to anyone interested in EMS and paramedicine evidence-based practice (EBP). Members typically have or seek to increase their critical appraisal skills, or already have experience conducting research.

Communication with the **Primary Appraiser Team** occurs electronically on a regular basis to inform them of PEP activities, ask for feedback or to provide feedback on submitted appraisals. From time to time as required, online meetings may be held. **Primary Appraisers** are expected to contribute to the appraisal process on a monthly basis.

Membership is via open expression of interest, invitation by the **Senior Editorial Team** or by referral from an existing team member. All potential recruits provide evidence of capability to perform the required responsibilities. If they are a novice appraiser they may be paired with a more experienced team member until they are comfortable with the appraisal process.

SENIOR APPRAISER TEAM

The PEP **Senior Appraiser Team** consists of members who have shown longstanding dedication to the PEP Program. They have shown a reliable and expert application of the PEP critical appraisal methods. The **Senior Appraiser Team** performs the second party appraisal of all studies that are included in PEP and ensures all PEP methods have been applied consistently. This team provides feedback to the Primary Appraiser Team members on individual appraisals.

DECISION EDITOR TEAM

The **Decision Editor Team** consists of members who have shown longstanding dedication to the PEP Program. They have shown a reliable and expert application of the PEP critical appraisal methods. The **Decision Editor Team** also contributes to second party appraisal and feedback on studies that are included in PEP.

Decision Editor Team members participate in discussions about the level and direction of the evidence when there is disagreement between the **Primary and Senior Appraisers**. The **Decision Editor Team** members contribute during evidence matrix meetings where the

summary of evidence placement of interventions is determined. This team also contributes to PEP products such as manuscripts and PEP state of the evidence reviews. Membership is by invitation by the **Senior Editorial Team**.

SENIOR EDITORIAL TEAM

The PEP **Senior Editorial Team** has been formed for the express purpose of leading the program, which includes the initial and ongoing development of the structure and process of the program and its day-to-day operations, including implementing and supporting other teams. In these capacities, the **Senior Editorial Team** will have the responsibility to take action in the best interest of the program as required, and where it deems appropriate, seek input from the general PEP membership.

The PEP **Senior Editorial Team** is ultimately accountable to the program for its actions and decisions, to the Director, Dalhousie Division of EMS, and the Chief, Dalhousie Department of Emergency Medicine.

POSITIONS

The PEP **Senior Editorial Team** consists of the following positions:

1. Editor in chief (Division of EMS, Director)
2. Program Coordinator (Division of EMS, KT Coordinator)
3. Senior Editors
 - a. EHS Research Coordinator
 - b. EHS Medical Director, Research
 - c. EHS Clinical Services Representative
 - d. EHS Critical Care Transport Representative
 - e. Editors at Large (1-2)
4. Division of EMS Administrative Support (ex officio)

Senior Editorial Team Positions

PEP **Senior Editorial Team** positions are appointed via virtue of position held or for editor at large positions; appointment by the current **Senior Editorial Team**.

Senior Editorial Team Position Description and Duties

Each member will review and sign an ‘**Senior Editorial Team** Member Roles and Responsibilities Agreement’ upon starting the position.

1. **Program Coordinator**

Position Description

- Coordinate PEP activities and PEP database.

Position Duties:

- Lead communication with the larger membership
- Manage PEP appraiser team membership
- Perform the PEP literature searches
- Screen the titles recovered in each search

- Perform full text review of each included study and assign the study to applicable interventions
- Coordinate the distribution of included studies and shepherd their movement through the various stages of the appraisal process
- Track and report PEP activities
- Coordinate and lead PEP deliverable activities such as state of the evidence reviews
- Advise and contribute to methodological procedures
- Lead PEP improvement initiatives
- Represent PEP at conferences and in the public forum
- Collect and organize reference material for PEP meetings
- Commit time and effort to meet obligations for PEP meetings, initiatives and projects
- Uses skills and abilities to manage and update PEP's website and social media platforms

2. Editor in Chief

Position Description:

- Commit time and effort to meet obligations for involvement in Program and board meetings, and to maintain PEP's communications platforms, in collaboration with other Board members
- With Program Coordinator lead all PEP Program initiatives

Position Duties:

- Develop and maintain PEP's strategy and assets
- Provide overall accountability for the Program
- Oversee the production of the annual report
- Chair the program meetings, may delegate to coordinator as appropriate
- Represent PEP to external stakeholders, in person and in written communication - may delegate to coordinator as appropriate

3. Senior Editors

Position Description:

- Provide expert level contributions to the team regarding the direction of the Program.

Position Duties:

- Perform secondary appraisals with the **Senior Appraiser Team**
- Contribute to initial and ongoing development of the structure and process of the Program and its day-to-day operations
- Attend monthly Senior Editor meetings
- Contribute to the vision of PEP improvement activities
- Provide feedback and invest efforts in PEP deliverables, including PEP state of the evidence reports and systematic reviews
- Approve major PEP communications
- Participate in the formation of the PEP evidence matrix decisions
- Members at large (1-2) from internal or external to Dalhousie University/EHS

4. Div of EMS Admin Support

Position Description:

- Provide secretarial support

Position Duties:

- Prepare minutes, agendas, scheduling of meetings and maintain PEP calendar
- Assist coordinator in obtaining literature
- Support coordinator as needed with administrative duties
- This is a non voting position

SENIOR EDITORIAL TEAM FUNCTIONING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Senior Editorial Team Meetings

The PEP **Senior Editorial Team** will meet monthly.

The agenda, minutes and actions of all meetings are made publicly accessible. These records are maintained by the Dalhousie University Division of EMS administrative support.

Senior Editorial Team Decision-making

Adoption of action by the PEP **Senior Editorial Team** is permitted by unanimous consent of **Senior Editorial Team** members for cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business or questions of little importance. Quorum is not required for these decisions.

In cases where the matter is put to a vote, a simple majority of **Senior Editorial Team** voting members is sufficient to adopt a motion, unless otherwise specified in the rules of order. Quorum for the **Senior Editorial Team** is the majority of the voting membership of the positions that have been filled.

The **Senior Editorial Team** will follow Bourniot's Rules of Order 4th edition, as appropriate for small boards and committees.

RESOURCES/FINANCIAL

The Department of Emergency Medicine provides support through the following resources:

Dept Research Manager

- assist with budgets and financial oversight
- assist with ensuring activities of PEP fit with Dept strategic plan

IT Support

- Sought internally where possible
- advise on external supports to the IT infrastructure when it is deemed necessary and/or appropriate to seek external input

ADMINISTRATIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

PEP maintains an administrative account through Dalhousie University, Division of EMS, Department of Emergency Medicine.

Financial Management

PEP financial management is the responsibility of the Director, Division of EMS, acting as Editor in Chief. The Division of EMS Director is in turn accountable to the Department Head/Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine, Dalhousie University. The EM Research Manager will assist with this responsibility.

The program may seek or receive funds from various organizations or grants over time and pursue non-profit revenue generation provided those funds are for the advancement of the set identified goals. To maintain the integrity of PEP, any funds received will be considered for a declaration stating any potential conflicts of interest.

Financial Reporting

The PEP **Senior Editorial Team** will provide annual financial reporting as part of the Division of EMS annual report. This report will include all revenues and expenditures in a transparent fashion, including funding donated or awarded to PEP for infrastructure and operations, and in-kind contributions.

Financial Management of Research and Team/Infrastructure grants

Principal Investigators will hold research and team/infrastructure grants in accounts within their academic institution and will be accountable for those funds, as normally occurs with typical research funding scenarios.

REPORTING TO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT

PEP, through the **Senior Editorial Team**, produces an annual report which is presented as part of the Dalhousie Division of EMS Annual Report. Activities of PEP are reviewed at the Division of EMS Annual General Meeting. This report is shared with all general members, stakeholder organizations, and funders.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

All PEP **Senior Appraiser Team** members are invited to the Dalhousie Division of EMS Division of EMS Annual General Meeting.

The agenda and minutes of the annual report are made publicly accessible. Records will be maintained by the administrative support staff.

COMMUNICATION

Day to day internal and external communications are generally handled by the Program Coordinator. Formal agreements, contracts and collaborative opportunities are arranged through the Division of EMS Director.

Communication between the **Senior Editorial Team** and the General Membership may include email, the PEP website, PEP social media platforms, through teleconferences/webinars, and the Annual General Meeting.

TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVAL

The terms of reference will be reviewed by the Board annually or when changes are required.

