



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health

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TO: All Massachusetts EMS Providers

FROM: Jamie Pianka, Director, OEMS

DATE: April 29, 2013

RE: Massachusetts EMS and the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians  
*(with clerical edits for posting)*

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The Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) has been working in collaboration with leaders from the EMS community for over eighteen months to develop a strategic plan for EMS in Massachusetts. This Strategic Planning Task Force was convened in late 2011 to identify several high level priorities for EMS delivery in the Commonwealth. The Task Force included physicians, EMS service directors, training institutions, regional EMS councils, providers and representatives from the fire service. Although many of these recommendations originated from the EMS community, the implications for improvement are bold and these strategies will require broad support for a successful transition.

One of the recommendations of the Task Force included the adoption of national standards for EMS certification and entails a transition back to the use of National EMS Certification offered by the National Registry for Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) as the basis for Massachusetts EMT certification. Massachusetts is one of only four states that currently do not recognize this national certification standard. Adopting the National Registry and adhering to other national training guidelines, as part of the National EMS Education Agenda, establishes uniform standards for minimum entry-level competency. It verifies for services, medical direction physicians and EMS coordinators that all Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) entering the system have met these standards.

## IMPLICATIONS

### National EMS Certification

Effective July 1, 2013, all *new* Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) candidates, at all levels will be required to participate in the NREMT certification process for both psychomotor and cognitive skills evaluation.

NREMT Registration

There will be four identified tracks, which Massachusetts EMTs can choose to follow once Massachusetts recognizes this certification standard.

1. All new EMT candidates requesting initial licensure after July 1, 2013 will be required to enter the NREMT Registry and maintain NREMT certification throughout their career as part of their Massachusetts licensure.
2. All existing Massachusetts-licensed EMTs who have current NREMT certification will be required to maintain their Registry certification as part of their Massachusetts licensure.
3. All EMS providers who were formerly registered by the NREMT, but have not maintained their NREMT certification will be able to have their certification reinstated, if currently licensed by Massachusetts OEMS without restrictions.. Those who have already successfully tested into the registry will **not** be required to test again.
4. EMTs that have never registered with the NREMT will be able to **maintain their Massachusetts licensure**, without NREMT certification, provided that they meet or exceed NREMT recertification training requirements and fulfill continuing education credits.

		Must take NREMT exams	New NREMT Fees	NREMT Certification	Con-Ed Profile at NREMT.org
Category 1	Candidates testing after July 1	YES	BLS \$15 ALS \$20	YES	YES
Category 2	Existing MA-EMTs currently NREMT	NO	NO	YES	YES
Category 3	Existing MA-EMTs previously NREMT*	NO	BLS \$15 ALS \$20	YES	YES
Category 4	Existing MA-EMTs never NREMT	NO	BLS \$20 ALS \$25	NO	YES

\*at the same provider level

Continuing-Education Credit Tracking

OEMS will offer a streamlined continuing education (con-ed) tracking process through the NREMT’s web-based system where Massachusetts EMTs can create a profile and manage their continuing education requirements for state certification, regardless of whether or not they have National Registry Status. The NREMT data system will serve as the sole system for tracking the continuing education credits of all EMTs, and will be transitioned in during the next two separate certification cycles. This approach will eliminate redundancy, ensure access to education for Massachusetts EMTs, facilitate the detection of training fraud, and strengthen physician involvement in paramedic training.

The current fee for NREMT recertification is \$15 for EMTs and \$20 for Paramedics per each two-year certification cycle, which represents a new fee to the EMS workforce in Massachusetts. There are several

payment models in Massachusetts and this cost will be shared by providers, ambulance services, and municipalities.

Efforts to assist training institutions, EMTs, ambulance services, and fire departments during this time are currently underway, along with several other quality improvement initiatives. Accomplishing these initiatives will require ongoing policy review as well as the cooperation and improved relationships of all stakeholders and participants in the EMS/healthcare theatre.

The Department will be working over the next several months to ensure comprehensive communications with stakeholders and the EMS community. We will provide outreach and opportunities for further discussion, and to answer the many questions related to this and other important OEMS initiatives. We will continue to provide information with increasing detail in upcoming weeks. Forthcoming information will include details about Massachusetts EMT renewals for upcoming 2014 re-certification cycle.

Respectfully,

Jamie Pianka, OEMS Director

CC: Emergency Medical Care Advisory Board (EMCAB)  
Massachusetts Regional EMS Offices  
Massachusetts Ambulance Association (MAA)  
Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts (FCAM)  
Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts (PFFM)  
Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA)  
Massachusetts State Trauma Committee Chair  
Massachusetts College of Emergency Physicians (MACEP)  
American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)  
Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS)  
Massachusetts Hospital Association (MHA)  
Executive Director Tré Rodriguez, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT)  
Executive Director Dia Gainor, National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)  
Executive Director George Hatch, Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the  
Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP)  
Massachusetts Office of Emergency Medical Services Strategic Planning Task Force  
Madeleine Biondolillo MD, Director, Bureau of Healthcare Safety & Quality  
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