



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Division of Health Professions Licensure
Board of Respiratory Care

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**RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS
AND
THE PERFORMANCE OF
EXTRACORPOREAL MEMBRANE OXYGENATION
(ECMO)**

It is the Board's position that the performance of Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) by respiratory therapists is within the scope of practice of licensed respiratory therapists (RRTs). Board regulations at 261 CMR 2.02 define respiratory care as a "[A} health profession that, under direction of a licensed physician, who has special expertise in respiratory care, utilizes the application of scientific principles for the identification, prevention, remediation, research, and rehabilitation of acute or chronic cardiopulmonary dysfunction thereby producing optimum health and function." 261 CMR 2.02 further states that "Respiratory Care is a changing and evolving profession and shall also include procedures described by the Clinical Practice Guidelines of the AARC, and duties consistent with the training and education of respiratory care personnel or related to the practice of respiratory care, as approved by the Board."

Any respiratory therapist who performs ECMO must meet the education and training requirements identified in the American Association of Respiratory Care's (AARC) Position Statement, Respiratory Therapists as Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Specialist, issued in 1998 and revised in 2007, which endorses the use of qualified and appropriately educated respiratory therapists as ECMO specialists.

The AARC's *Position Statement: Respiratory Therapists as Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Specialist* may be found at
http://www.aarc.org/resources/position_statements/ecmo.html.