

A STRATEGY FOR “TRANSITIONING” CURRENTLY CERTIFIED AND LICENSED EMS PROFESSIONALS TO THE NATIONAL EMS SCOPE OF PRACTICE MODEL STANDARDS

Purpose:

At the National and State levels, the EMS profession is undergoing major change. Individuals in Connecticut who completed initial EMS certification programs after September 1, 2011 have received instruction in the National EMS Scope of Practice Model following the approach described by the National EMS Education Standards. Licensed and certified EMS professionals, who completed initial certification preparation prior to September, 2011 were prepared in accordance with the National Standard Curricula. The National EMS Scope of Practice Model and the National EMS Education Standards include assessments and interventions not found in the National Standard Curricula. To assure that all EMS providers are operating from the same understanding, and to assure the consistency of care, previously certified persons must be “transitioned” to the *National EMS Scope of Practice Model* material.

This document is intended to:

- 1. Alert EMS-Instructors regarding major changes in the recertification process for all certified Emergency Medical Responders and Emergency Medical Technicians**
- 2. Describe the implementation strategy for orienting currently certified EMS professionals to the National Scope of Practice expectations (also known as the Transition process)**
- 3. Identify the timeline for implementing the Transition process.**
- 4. Make EMS-Instructors and providers aware that a new recertification examination that targets transition material will be incorporated into the transition / recertification process for the Emergency Medical Responder and Emergency Medical Technician levels AS WELL AS the Initial Certification of Emergency Medical Responders on October 1, 2013.**
- 5. Provide background and support information that describes the necessity for the Transition process.**

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION:

Nationally, the Emergency Medical Services is in the process of moving towards the vision of the industry proposed in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) document, *The Emergency Medical Services Agenda for the Future* (1996). The ultimate goal of the NHTSA initiative has been to integrate EMS more fully into the broader healthcare and medical communities and to model the preparation of EMS providers more closely with that of licensed and certified professionals in the other health care disciplines.

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The evolution of the *EMS Education Agenda for the Future* and its component elements received considerable analysis, discussion and review on both the national and statewide level, and the process reflects a commitment to national consistency and professional development that characterize other disciplines in the health care and public health communities.

The *Emergency Medical Services Education Agenda for the Future* (2000) more clearly articulated the NHTSA vision in terms of a sequential developmental process.

Nationally:

- 2005 -- The *National EMS Core Content*
 - describes the span of EMS interventions and assessments appropriate for out of hospital care;
 - developed by the National Association of EMS Physicians and the American College of Emergency Physicians
- 2007 -- The *National Scope of Practice Model*
 - Identifies a more legal definition of the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of EMS professionals.
 - Developed by the National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO)
 - Supports national consistency for the terms and expectations within the EMS profession.
- 2009 -- The *National EMS Education Standards*
 - Relates the Scope of Practice Model to the Core Content in terms of educational requirements
 - Developed by the National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE)
 - Moves away from a static, rigid set of curricula to a format that allows for advances in medicine, medical technology, educational strategies, instructional capabilities and changes in the scopes of practice.
- 2009 – *Gap Analysis*
 - Developed by the National Association of State EMS Officials
 - Identifies the differences between the previous National Standard Curricula and the Scope of Practice Models at each level
- 2011 – National publication of *Transition Templates* for previously certified / licensed EMS professionals
 - Developed by the National Association of State EMS Officials
 - Relates the *Gap Analysis*, the *Education Standards* and the *Instructional Guidelines*
- 2012 -- National Certification Examinations addressing the National Scope of Practice Model
- 2013 – National Educational Program Accreditation at the Paramedic level

Statewide (accomplished):

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- 2006 – Introduction of the National Scope of Practice Model
- 2008 – Introduction of the National Education Standards
- 2011 – Approval of the *EMS Education Agenda for the Future (National Scope of Practice Model / Education Standards* for Emergency Medical Responder, Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic)
- 2011 – Rollout of Education Standards to EMS Instructors
- 2011 – Implementation of National Education Standards for Initial Certification (EMR, EMT and Paramedic)
- 2012 – Initial certification examinations at New Standards for EMT’s and Paramedics
- 2012 – Implementation of New Standards for Practical Examinations for EMT’s
- 2013 – Implementation of Paramedic Program Accreditation

Statewide (implementing):

- October 1, 2013 -- Implementation of Transition to National Scope of Practice Model for previously certified and licensed personnel (education)
- October 1, 2013 – Implementation of Transition to National Scope of Practice Model for previously certified and licensed personnel (testing)
- September 1, 2016 – all certified personnel will be oriented to the National Scope of Practice Model expectations.

Statewide (under consideration):

- Status of the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician certification level

RATIONALE:

The National Association of State EMS Officials has identified the assessments, interventions and capabilities available to each Scope of Practice level that differ from those taught under the previous National Standard Curriculum for those levels and listed them in the *Gap Analysis* (2009). To assure that care is provided consistently, States like Connecticut that have adopted the National Scope of Practice Model must assure that EMS professionals certified previous to the implementation of the Scope of Practice Model have addressed the competencies identified by the Gap Analysis.

Connecticut is not alone in the need to update EMS providers; the National Association of State EMS Officials, through NHTSA, has published “Transition Templates” for all levels of certification. The Templates provide a national strategy for “bridging the gap” between the contents of National Scope of Practice Model and the preceding National Standard Curricula. However, each State is responsible for implementing the transition process in a way that meets its needs, capabilities and structure.

The Connecticut OEMS will require that all individuals certified at the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) levels of certification complete a “Transition” program as part of his or her recertification process beginning October 1, 2013 and continuing through September 30, 2016.

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All EMS Instructors will be required to develop and document recertification programs that specifically address the topic areas described by the NHTSA Transition Templates for the recertification level (EMR or EMT) and related support materials posted on the OEMS Training webpage. New Applications to Conduct Transition Recert Training Form (T1) are intended to guide instructors through this process and to document that recertification programs address the National Scope of Practice and Education Standards. In addition, EMS professionals completing Transition Recertification Programs must have documentation of Transition Recertification on Transition Course Completion Forms (T4). By following this procedure, the Transition to the New Scope of Practice Standards process will have been completed by September 30, 2016. EMS agencies and Medical Directors may choose other strategies within this time frame; for State Certification, this strategy will accomplish required change within the existing regulatory framework.

The Office of Emergency Medical Services plays no role in continuing education requirements for licensure as a paramedic. Local sponsor hospitals set educational requirements for continued medical authorization as paramedics. However, many paramedics and some Emergency Medical Technicians choose to maintain National Registry Certification. The National Registry of EMT’s requires State approval for recognition of “recertification programs”, and the Registry has also set time lines for Nationally Registered professionals to address the transition materials. For Connecticut OEMS approval, paramedic “recert” programs must also address the National Transition Template and State guidelines effective no later than October 1, 2013. This approval is extended as a courtesy to National Registered paramedics; because no recertification education is required for paramedic re-licensure, individuals, services and sponsor hospitals are at liberty to either recognize or not recognize State approval for paramedic authorization.

EMT’s in Connecticut who wish to maintain National Registration must be certain that the program in which they enroll are designated as Transition Recertification Programs; although the Transition strategy identifies the State approach to updating EMT’s, the National Registry timelines and recertification process is separate and a personal (not State) concern and must be addressed on an individual basis.

ELEMENTS:

National Scope of Practice Model Implementation

From the National perspective, the transition from the former EMS certification levels to the new National EMS Scope of Practice Model designations rely on four essential documents published by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Association of EMS Officials. EMS Instructors have been oriented to them already, and EMS certified and licensed professionals may wish to become familiar with them as well.

1. The *National EMS Education Standards* provide broad conceptual approaches to the educational strategies needed to develop the competencies that each of the provider levels must possess to fulfill the *National EMS Scope of Practice Model* expectations.

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2. The *Instructional Guidelines* for each of the certification levels, while not an official guide or curriculum for instructors to follow, do provide useful information for “fleshing out” the content areas needed to address the *Education Standards*.
3. The *2009 NASEMSO Gap Analysis Template* contrasts the content included in the National Standard Curricula for the previous EMS certification levels with the content of the *National EMS Scope of Practice / Education Standards*. The *Gap Analysis* portrays what is “in” and what is “out” from the Scope of Practice Model perspective
4. The *National EMS Education Standards Transition Templates* summarize the changes and link the *Education Standards* to the *Instructional Guidelines* on a competency by competency basis.

The links to these resources may be found on the OEMS Web page.

When combined with publisher instructor support materials, the NHTSA and NASEMSO documents provide an extensive array of support materials for instructors and providers to determine what changes have been made to the certification / and recertification requirements and expectations.

The Connecticut OEMS has also posted some resource documents on the web page to assist with the planning and preparation of both initial certification and recertification processes. These resources include the Applications to Conduct Training (T1 Forms), Course Completion Forms (T4’s), and schematic forms that summarize the Transition Templates and relate those requirements to the State EMS provider recertification requirements.

State Specific Elements

The National EMS Scope of Practice Model allows for some State-specific modifications. The Connecticut EMS Medical Advisory Committee (CEMSMAC) has reviewed the National EMS Scope of Practice Model, the Gap Analysis Template as well as past-practice in Connecticut and has suggested a series of State specific additions or deletions from the National Model to address the perceived needs of the State. These modifications may be found in the *Connecticut Specific Scope of Practice Skills 06-01-13*, and instructors should include these specific modifications in their initial and transition programs.

Instructors preparing lessons and educational strategies for State specific competencies may find instructional support from a variety of sources. The OEMS website may post approved instructor resources such as Tourniquet for EMR’s and others as they are developed. Instructor materials from other scope of practice levels, such as splinting and nasopharyngeal airway use from EMT level texts may be useful for EMR programs in the State. Additionally, instructors may find internet resources, such as the Department of Children and Families (DCF) webpage for mandated child abuse reporting resources.

The evolution of state specific modifications of the State Scope of Practice may evolve more quickly than the National Model, so instructors and providers will be well advised to visit the OEMS Training webpage on a regular basis.

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Examinations

The certification and recertification examinations should assess the competence of candidates in terms of the new Scope of Practice Model. For initial certification, the National Registry of EMT’s provides the examination required for Connecticut initial certification. For recertification purposes, an examination that addresses the new Scope of Practice expectations will be ready for implementation on October 1, 2013.

All candidates recertifying after October 1, 2013 will be required to take and pass the updated examination.

The recertification examination will be administered as previous recertification examinations have been: locally administered in a paper and pencil format, overseen by approved proctors, scored at the State Office, and results reported to the candidates through the instructor of record. As with any system, modifications of the process may evolve over time.

For recertification purposes, course coordinators will conduct psychomotor examinations within the context of their courses and maintain the documentation of successful completion of in their program’s records. Practical examinations should verify psychomotor competencies in the core skills of CPR for Health Care Professionals, Patient Assessment for Medical and Trauma Emergencies, Spinal Immobilization, Ventilation of an Adult Patient with a BVM, and extremity immobilization skills.

PROCESS:

All individuals recertifying at the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and Emergency Medical Technician levels must successfully complete a transition recertification course. Each transition recertification course requires OEMS approval.

Although most of the following criteria exist already, these points should serve as a reminder. To obtain OEMS approval, all courses must:

1. be submitted on the approved Application to Conduct Training for Transition Recertification courses (NEW and Revised specifically for the Transition Program, June 1, 2013 or later),
2. address all “Essential” AND “Supplementary” material identified in the NASEMSO Transition Template for the Scope of Practice level to be recertified. This information may be found in the NASEMSO Transition Template or in the “Gap Analysis Transition Guide OEMS” for that Scope of Practice level (NEW and specifically for the Transition Program process).
3. satisfy all regulatory requirements (existing content and hourly minimum requirements),

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4. be submitted no less than thirty days in advance of the course start date (existing requirement)
5. receive approval from OEMS before the first class session (existing requirement).

The Application to Conduct Transition Recertification Training is designed to prompt instructors to address the Transition material for course content and to document that the content and duration standards have been met. Each recertification level has its own Application to Conduct Transition Recertification Training form (T1) that indicates the particular content area requirements (the first column [cells AB9 to AB26] and State program minimum duration (N10). Every program must address the Education Standard Competencies listed for at least one course module, and each program must meet the minimum course length listed.

The Goal of the Transition Process:

The expectation for all Transition Recertification programs is that candidates will have the opportunity to receive exposure to and develop fundamental competency in all aspects of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors described by the particular NASEMSO Transition Template and will have sufficient preparation to demonstrate competency by passing the updated Recertification Examination.

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RESOURCES:

Resources for approaching the Transition Process may be found in the electronic folder entitled “CT EMS Transition Process 06-01-13”.

That folder contains four electronic sub-folders, each with a related set of electronic documents:

1. **An Essential Transition Program Resource Folder**

a. **A Guide EMS Education Resources 06-08-11**

This document contains links to the web sites where the documents essential to the entire EMS Education Agenda for the Future may be located at their source agency.

b. **Connecticut Specific Scope of Practice Skills**

This document lists the skills identified in the National Scope of Practice Model for each of the provider levels as well as some that were not listed in the National document. This listing indicates which skills may be allowed at particular Scope of Practice levels as viewed by the Connecticut EMS Medical Advisory Committee (CEMSMAC). **THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR STATE-WIDE EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. ALL PROVIDERS MUST CHECK WITH THEIR SPONSOR HOSPITAL TO IDENTIFY WHICH OF THE CEMSMAC ALLOWED SKILLS ARE AUTHORIZED BY LOCAL MEDICAL OVERSIGHT.** CEMSMAC acceptance is NOT automatic authorization to perform these skills; local medical directors have the responsibility and authority to restrict the practice of these skills.

c. **FAQ Implementation of the EMS Education Agenda**

This document was originally distributed as part of the EMS Instructor Rollout of the National EMS Education Standards, and may provide useful information regarding the Implementation of the EMS Education Agenda

d. **Guide for Using the Transition T1 Forms 06-01-13**

This document provides assistance to EMS-Instructors who conduct Transition Recert Courses. The document attempts to show instructors how to:

- a. identify the Transition Program requirements,
- b. determine the Recertification Program requirements,
- c. demonstrate that the program addresses the requirements

e. **NHTSA EMS Education Standards**

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This is the core document that describes the educational philosophy and essential structure of the education process required to prepare EMS professionals. It replaces the National Standard Curricula and provides the skeleton that EMS Instructors will use to “flesh out” educational programs and strategies necessary to prepare EMS professionals.

f. **Transition Program Time Guides 06-01-13**

This document may be used by EMS-Instructors to plan Transition Recert programs. The document lists the time frames (in minutes) suggested by NASEMSO for each of the Scope of Practice level Transition content areas. For each provider level, the document then sums the content time suggestions for a minimum period of time (in hours) necessary to address the Transition content.

Instructors must keep in mind three essential concepts:

- a. The central guiding concept of the Education Standards is developing student competence in essential skills, knowledge and behaviors as distinct from addressing minimum course lengths. Although the NASEMSO Templates refer to time frames, the central concern is demonstrating EMS provider competency in the Transition content
- b. The time frames identified by NASEMSO suggest that Transition content may be addressed within Connecticut regulatory requirements for minimum recertification program requirements. However, the goal of Transition Recert Programs is the development of competency in new material and assuring continued competency in already established core responsibilities. Although Transition Recert Programs must meet or exceed Recert Program minimum requirements, the length programs necessary to fully develop necessary capability may be substantially longer than the minimums
- c. There will be a written examination that is intended to assess both continued competence in established skills and knowledge AND Transition content. Recertification will be based on passing this examination.

g. **Transition Program T4 Forms 06-01-13**

The Transition Program T4 form has very little change; the form records and reports the recertification the recertification education process, and can be used to track groups of individuals in the same educational process or the

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particular educational process (including distributive learning activities) of individuals. The instructor must, however, “sign off” on the Transition content of the recertification process by changing the default “No” to “Yes” for Transition Program line (row 36) for each candidate. For candidates in a live program under the EMS-I direction, this presents no issue; for candidates submitting distributive learning certificates, the Instructor should verify that the distributive module complies with the Transition content or establish compliance separately.

2. EMR Transition Materials

a. EMR Gap Analysis Transition Content Guide (OEMS)

This document provides a “thumbnail” summary of the information provided by the NASEMSO Transition Template

b. EMR Transition Recert Course T1 Form 06-01-13

c. FR to EMR Transition Template June 2011 (NASEMSO)

This document identifies the National Standard Curriculum to National Scope of Practice / Education Standards “Gap” Content and links that content area to the particular area of the related Instructional Guideline

d. EMR Instructional Guidelines (NHTSA 2009)

The Guideline is a NHTSA document that attempts to bridge the strategy embodied by a National Standard Curriculum to the less detailed and more flexible concepts that support the National EMS Education Standards. The Instructional Guidelines should be considered a starting point for approaching Education Standards and developing educational programs; Instructors may well be required to augment and supplement material in the Instructional Guidelines in order to completely address and, perhaps more importantly, to adapt over time to changes in the Scope of Practice and Education Standards.

3. EMT Transition Materials

a. EMT Gap Analysis Transition Content Guide (OEMS)

This document provides a “thumbnail” summary of the information provided by the NASEMSO Transition Template

b. EMT Transition Recert Course T1 Form 06-01-13

c. EMT-B to EMT Transition Template June 2011 (NASEMSO)

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This document identifies the National Standard Curriculum to National Scope of Practice / Education Standards “Gap” Content and links that content area to the particular area of the related Instructional Guideline

d. **EMT Instructional Guidelines (NHTSA 2009)**

The Guideline is a NHTSA document that attempts to bridge the strategy embodied by a National Standard Curriculum to the less detailed and more flexible concepts that support the National EMS Education Standards. The Instructional Guidelines should be considered a starting point for approaching Education Standards and developing educational programs; Instructors may well be required to augment and supplement material in the Instructional Guidelines in order to completely address and, perhaps more importantly, to adapt over time to changes in the Scope of Practice and Education Standards.

4. **Paramedic Transition Materials**

a. **Paramedic Gap Analysis Transition Content Guide (OEMS)**

This document provides a “thumbnail” summary of the information provided by the NASEMSO Transition Template

b. **Paramedic Transition Recert Course T1 Form 06-01-13**

c. **EMT-Paramedic to Paramedic Transition Template June 2011 (NASEMSO)**

This document identifies the National Standard Curriculum to National Scope of Practice / Education Standards “Gap” Content and links that content area to the particular area of the related Instructional Guideline

d. **Paramedic Instructional Guidelines (NHTSA 2009)**

The Guideline is a NHTSA document that attempts to bridge the strategy embodied by a National Standard Curriculum to the less detailed and more flexible concepts that support the National EMS Education Standards. The Instructional Guidelines should be considered a starting point for approaching Education Standards and developing educational programs; Instructors may well be required to augment and supplement material in the Instructional Guidelines in order to completely address and, perhaps more importantly, to adapt over time to changes in the Scope of Practice and Education Standards.