



February 10, 2023

Title: Response to the NJ Office of EMS Listening Sessions on EMS Education

Introduction

The New Jersey Association of EMS Educators (NJAEMSE) is responding to the recent listening sessions conducted by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) on EMS education. The purpose of these sessions was to gather feedback and insights from stakeholders in the EMS community, including EMS educators and providers.

Purpose

The purpose of this position statement is to provide the NJAEMSE's perspective on the feedback received during the listening sessions and to offer additional recommendations for the future of EMS education in New Jersey.

Findings:

The NJ Association of EMS Educators (NJAEMSE) has summarized the key themes and issues raised during the recent listening session conducted by the NJ Office of EMS. During the session, and through own experience, NJAEMSE members found areas for improvement in the initial instructor process, clinical experience, compliance, attendance, and a bridge program from EMR to EMT. These areas have been identified as potential opportunities for further development and enhancement in the EMS education system in New Jersey.

Recommendations

Based on the feedback received and our own experience in the EMS education community, the NJAEMSE recommends the following actions to improve EMS education in the state:

EMT Instructor Process Recommendation

The NJ Association of EMS Educators (NJAEMSE) suggests that training centers invest in the growth of potential instructors by establishing an internal training program that is sanctioned by the NJ Office of Emergency Medical Services (NJ OEMS). The program should have a comprehensive curriculum and culminate in a competency assessment by the training center. Through this process, the training center would be able to train instructors to varying status levels (skills instructor, full instructor, lead instructor). Upon successful completion, the instructor candidates will then undergo a screening session conducted by the NJ Office of EMS and NJ State Regional Faculty. Upon successful completion of the screening session, the candidate will be awarded their instructor credential.

EMR to EMT Recommendation

The NJ Association of EMS Educators recommends the creation of a bridge program that will allow Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs) to upgrade their skills to Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). This program should have specific guidelines in place, including that the EMR program must be completed at the same institute where the EMT program will be taken. By having a seamless transition from one program to another, EMRs will be able to further their education and provide better care for patients in emergency situations. This will ultimately benefit the entire EMS community and the patients they serve.



Clinical Experience

To obtain a better overall clinical experience, EMT students should have a combination of both hospital and field experience. In addition to spending 10 hours in the Emergency Department, they should also have a minimum of 12 hours of field experience on a Basic Life Support ambulance, during which they should have at least 5 patient interactions. This will allow them to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations, develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, and gain valuable mentorship from experienced professionals in the field. This combination of hospital and field experience will provide EMT students with a well-rounded clinical experience that will serve as a foundation for their future careers in emergency medical services.

Testing Standards

The current testing standard used in the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) programs, which requires a student to have only two failures before being dropped from the program, has been a dissatisfier for staff and students. The two-failures-and-out method fails to take into account the overall performance of a student and can result in high stress and pressure to perform in short-term assessments. An alternative approach would be to use an overall average over a specified period of time, such as a quarter, to assess the progress and proficiency of EMT students. This approach provides a more comprehensive picture of a student's performance, as it takes into account not only the number of failures but also the frequency and severity of those failures. Additionally, this type of assessment would allow students to better manage their performance and growth over time, rather than having to focus solely on high-stakes assessments. By adopting an overall average approach, EMT programs can provide students with a more supportive and empowering learning environment, ultimately leading to better prepared and more competent graduates.

Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE)

It is our recommendation that NJ Office of EMS recognize and accept programs approved by the Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE) for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) in the state. This recognition would allow EMTs in New Jersey to take advantage of the flexibility and convenience of nationwide education and training programs approved by CAPCE. This would not only provide EMTs with access to a wider range of quality continuing education programs, but also make it easier for them to maintain their certification as they move or work in different states. By recognizing CAPCE-approved programs, the state of New Jersey would be taking a positive step towards supporting the professional development of its EMTs and improving the quality of emergency medical services throughout the state.

Conclusion

The NJAEMSE appreciates the opportunity to provide our perspective on the feedback received during the NJ OEMS listening sessions on EMS education. We believe that working together with the OEMS and other stakeholders in the EMS community is crucial to ensuring the continued growth and success of EMS education in New Jersey.

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