



## **NAEMT Position**

### **Advanced Education for EMS practitioners**

#### **Statement:**

NAEMT believes in advanced education for EMS practitioners to support the evolving role of EMS and provide additional career opportunities for EMS personnel. Advanced education should focus on expanding the knowledge and skills of EMTs and paramedics to support their ability to fully provide emergent, urgent and preventive patient care in the out-of-hospital environment with commensurate compensation that recognizes their advanced education and is comparable to other healthcare professionals with the same skillsets.

EMS systems must receive appropriate funding at the local, state and national levels to support the advanced education and subsequent additional compensation that EMS practitioners with advanced education should receive.

Building a stronger, more broadly skilled and educated EMS workforce will support the ability of communities to respond to ongoing changes in the healthcare needs of their residents, and provide a flexible and adaptable healthcare component that can be called upon in public health emergencies and disasters.

The creation of both clinical and operational career ladders is crucial to the sustainability of the EMS workforce. Advanced clinical, management, and leadership education will enhance the competencies needed to advance EMS practitioners into expanded career roles. EMS agencies can support their workforce by encouraging ongoing education and providing opportunities to use advanced skills in enhanced roles.

#### **Background:**

The publication of the [EMS Education Agenda for the Future](#) in 2000, the [National EMS Core Content](#) in 2005, the [National EMS Scope of Practice Model 2019: Including Change Notices 1.0 and 2.0](#) in 2023, and the [EMS Education-Standards 2021 FNL.pdf](#) in 2021 created a national framework for an integrated education system for EMS. This system serves to ensure that EMTs and paramedics receive a standardized body of training to allow them to provide traditional emergent and urgent patient care.

However, over the past several years, EMS agencies have been expanding the services they provide to communities and healthcare systems, adding the services envisioned by the 1996 [EMS Agenda for the Future](#) and [EMS Agenda 2050: A People-Centered Vision for the Future of Emergency Medical Services](#) for overall community health and patient navigation, in addition to emergency response and transport.

To realize the potential value of EMS as a provider of emergent, urgent and preventive healthcare in the out-of-hospital environment, the EMS workforce must be adequately trained to provide, manage, and lead the full spectrum of medical services that meets the particular needs of their communities. These value-added services may include:

- Ambulance Transport Alternatives – the response, assessment, treatment and referral to definitive medical care, which may or may not include ambulance transport to an emergency department.
- Alternative Response – an EMS response tailored to the anticipated needs of a patient, including the response of specially trained EMS practitioners to navigate patients with non-emergent medical and behavioral health issues.
- Community Paramedicine – the proactive use of specially trained EMS practitioners to assist with patient education on social determinants of health, chronic disease management, preventive services, engagement with patient centered medical homes, and connections with relevant community resources.

To remain relevant and valued as our nation's healthcare paradigm continues to change, EMS agencies should consider offering their communities an enhanced menu of emergency, --- preventive, and chronic care medical services. Agencies of all types, no matter the delivery model, have the opportunity to identify and address gaps in health care and demonstrate added value to their community leaders in this new era of healthcare. This evolving role in the local community's healthcare system will require an EMS workforce with enhanced knowledge and skills.

NAEMT encourages all EMS practitioners and clinicians to seek out additional education opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. Many EMS practitioners seek additional education in the physician assistant or nursing profession. Bridge programs that provide additional skills and knowledge should be developed and/or promoted (i.e., EMS practitioner/ to PA, EMS practitioner/ to RN). Maintaining an EMS practitioner license/certification in conjunction with other healthcare certifications allows for the expansion of skills in the out-of-hospital environment.

The EMS community must work collaboratively to identify and understand the additional knowledge, skills and abilities that EMS practitioners need to successfully evolve as a profession, including the costs associated with this additional education and how it will be funded.

The possibility of federal advanced degree requirements and/or credentials and independent practice for paramedics must be considered in the context of how EMS practitioners interface with other healthcare professionals. The potential value that may be created must be evaluated with a multi-jurisdictional view of how the establishment of a new advanced federal status would impact the overall health care delivery system, health care economics and reimbursement, and state laws and regulations that govern the practice of medicine.

NAEMT actively advocates for higher levels of EMS agency compensation that cover the cost of delivering the service, sustaining a high-quality workforce, and creating career ladders. This

includes advocating for increases in the ambulance fee schedule, reimbursement for treatment in place and transport to alternate destinations, and funding for mobile integrated healthcare and community paramedicine programs, and other new clinical opportunities.

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