



NAEMT Position Statement Accreditation of EMS Education Programs

Statement:

One of NAEMT's core values is our belief that the EMS profession must be supported by education and certification systems that produce well-trained, resilient professionals qualified to provide the patient care demanded of their positions. NAEMT believes in the value of accreditation in EMS education to assess the quality of institutions and their programs and services by measuring them against agreed-upon standards to ensure those standards are met.ⁱ NAEMT supports accreditation of paramedic programs to verify that institutions are preparing competent entry-level paramedics capable of becoming personnel for employment in the EMS workforce.

NAEMT believes that an accrediting body for paramedic education must be responsive to the needs of all EMS stakeholders, including practitioners, their employers, educators, and state regulators, and must be able to demonstrate the value of its accreditation process to ensuring educational programs will produce competent entry-level personnel. We believe that, to date, the current paramedic accrediting agency has not been responsive to industry concerns, nor has it sufficiently demonstrated its value to students, employing EMS agencies, or EMS educational institutions. NAEMT calls on the current paramedic accrediting agency to address industry concerns regarding its processes and value.

We believe that the current financial limitations of our nation's EMS system must be taken into account when considering the cost of paramedic program accreditation. The current economic model for EMS makes it difficult for many EMS agencies to sufficiently compensate their EMTs. Paying for paramedic training is a struggle for most EMTs and out of reach for many. Given these limitations, most paramedic educational programs are not in a position to increase the price of their programs to absorb the cost of accreditation.

While recognizing that there are costs associated with accreditation from any accrediting agency, we believe that consideration should be given to identifying other options for paramedic accreditation. We note that there are various accrediting agencies that provide assessment to ensure that quality education is being provided. Many other types of post-secondary healthcare education systems that lead to professional certifications, including nursing and emergency dispatch, recognize multiple accrediting bodies.ⁱⁱ Having more than one option for paramedic accreditation may serve as an incentive to improve both responsiveness and cost to educational institutions.

Background:

Numerous studies support the value of accreditation to ensure that educational institutions prepare competent graduates.ⁱⁱⁱ Peer-reviewed research conducted in 2013 indicated that graduates from nationally accredited paramedic programs perform better than those from non-accredited schools.^{iv} However, no additional research on this subject has been published since that study.

Continued verification that the accreditation process is contributing to competent, entry-level paramedics is needed, and should include a survey of EMS agency hiring managers to ensure that

entry-level paramedics are meeting the needs and expectations of their agencies and the patients they serve.

Research should also be conducted into the various accrediting agencies to determine those that could provide assessments of paramedic programs to ensure they are preparing competent entry-level paramedics capable of becoming personnel for employment in the EMS workforce.

ⁱ <https://coaemsp.org>

ⁱⁱ [Nursing School Accreditation || RegisteredNursing.org](https://www.nursing-school-accreditation.org); <https://www.apcointl.org/services/agency-training-program-certification/>; <https://www.emergencydispatch.org/what-we-do/accreditation>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.chea.org/value-accreditation>

^{iv} [Accredited Paramedic Program Graduates Have Higher Student Ability Estimates](#), NREMT, January, 2017

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