

Standards For State Recognition Of Emergency Medical Service Continuing Education Providers (*Education Groups*)

I. Goal

To establish, maintain and promote appropriate standards of quality for continuing educational programs in the Emergency Medical Services Professions in the State of Colorado.

II. Introduction

These standards are established by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (the Department), Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division with endorsement from the State Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Council to define the minimum standards to which State recognized providers of Emergency Medical Services continuing education will be held accountable.

Authority to establish EMS education standards is granted to the department in Regulation 6 CCR 1015-3, Chapter 1 (Rules Pertaining to EMS Education and Certification). State recognized EMS continuing education groups shall comply with all federal and state statutes and rules as applicable.

State recognized EMS continuing education groups may select the education offering type(s) they wish to conduct: refresher courses, transition courses and/or continuing education topics.

Unless otherwise noted, these standards are effective upon approval by the Emergency Medical and Trauma Services Chief.

III. Definitions

A. Recognition

A process of application and verification that an EMS continuing education group meets State recognition standards. Only authorized representatives of education centers or education groups recognized by the State of Colorado will be allowed to verify renewal applications.

B. Clinical education

Education conducted under real patient conditions consists of two types:

1. Facility clinical education - Clinical education conducted within a medical facility such as a hospital, clinic, long or short term care facility, etc. in the context of a specific and defined program with documented goals and objectives for the experience.
2. Field clinical education - Clinical education conducted with an EMS transport or non-transport response agency in the context of a specific and defined program with documented goals and objectives for the experience.

C. Continuing education

Education that consists of individual stand-alone topics conducted real time by an instructor or completed through independent learning. Content of an initial, refresher, or transition course may be accepted as continuing education topics. Continuing education may also be approved when the source is relevant to the EMS Provider level when completed through other educational endeavors such as nursing or medical school coursework provided the content is consistent with the EMS Provider's level scope of practice, guidelines or requirements.

D. Course

A series of connected topics within a defined curriculum.

E. Class

Individual or isolated topic or presentation.

F. Department

Within these standards, the use of the term "Department" shall refer to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

G. Education center

A State recognized provider of initial courses, EMS continuing education topics and/or refresher courses that qualify graduates for state and/or National Registry EMS Provider certification.

H. Education group

A State recognized provider of continuing education topics and/or refresher courses that qualify individuals for renewal of a state and/or National Registry EMS Provider certification. An education group may provide Intravenous Therapy and Medication Administration coursework to qualify an individual for medical director authorization of IV skills.

I. Independent learning

Education that is conducted without direct contact with an instructor. This may include, but is not limited to, Internet-based education, trade journal articles, computer-based or audio/video presentations. All independent learning shall include learning objectives and evaluation instruments.

J. Practical skills examination

A skills test consisting of psychomotor evaluation with hands-on demonstration of specified competencies.

K. Transition course

A course that provides new material to an EMS Provider level to meet new standards at the same level.

IV. Education Group Goals and Outcomes

A. Education Group Goals

1. There shall be a written statement of the education group's goals and objectives consistent with and responsive to the demonstrated needs and expectations of the various communities of interest served by the education group.
2. Course or class specific statements of goals and objectives provide the basis for program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Such goals and objectives shall be compatible with both the mission of the sponsoring institution(s) and the expectations and substantiated needs of the communities of interest. Goals and learning domains are based upon the substantiated needs of health care providers and employers, and the educational needs of the students served by the educational program.

B. Appropriateness of Goals and Objectives

1. The education group shall regularly assess its goals and objectives. Education group personnel shall identify and respond to changes in the needs and/or expectations of its communities of interest.
2. An advisory committee, which is representative of these communities of interest, should meet at least annually to assist education group personnel in formulating and periodically revising appropriate goals and objectives, monitoring needs and expectations, and ensuring education group responsiveness to change.

C. Minimum Expectations

The education group shall have the following goal(s) defining minimum expectations:

1. Each continuing education course or class will review or increase the knowledge and/or competencies of the EMS Provider level for which the course is intended.
2. Education groups providing course or content beyond entry-level competence shall clearly delineate this intent. If the course or class is designed for students to achieve a new level of practice, the education group shall provide evidence that all completing students have achieved the new competencies prior to practice in the field.

V. Education Group Eligibility

A. Education Group

An education group shall be at least one of the following:

1. A post-secondary academic institution located in Colorado and accredited by an institutional accrediting agency or equivalent that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and shall be authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to provide a post-secondary program or to approve college credit.

2. A Colorado licensed hospital, clinic or medical center accredited by a healthcare accrediting agency or equivalent that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and authorized under applicable law or other acceptable authority to provide healthcare
 3. A Colorado based EMS provider agency
 4. A Colorado based independent training organization
- B. Responsibilities of Education Group

The education group shall assure that the provisions of these Standards are met.

VI. Resources

A. Type and Amount

1. Group Resources - Group resources shall be sufficient to ensure the achievement of the course's goals and outcomes. Resources include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Faculty
 - b) Curriculum
 - c) Finances
 - d) Access to facilities
 - e) Hospital/clinical affiliations
 - f) Equipment/supplies
 - g) Instructional reference materials
2. Hospital/Clinical Affiliations - For all affiliations students shall have access to adequate numbers of patients appropriate to the course objectives.

B. Personnel

The education group shall have sufficient faculty and staff with the necessary qualifications to achieve the course's stated goals, objectives, and outcomes.

1. Education Group Director

- a) Responsibilities - The education group director shall be responsible for all aspects of the Group, including, but not limited to:
 - 1) the administration, organization, and supervision of the educational program,
 - 2) the continuous quality review and improvement of the educational program,
 - 3) long range planning and ongoing development of the program,

- 4) the effectiveness of the program and have systems in place to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program,
 - 5) cooperative involvement with the medical director,
 - 6) adequate controls to assure the quality of the delegated responsibilities and,
 - 7) skill attestation oversight.
- b) Qualifications - The education group director shall:
- 1) demonstrate competence in the administration of educational programs,
 - 2) have completed a state-approved EMS Instructor course or have equivalent training in education and be knowledgeable about methods of instruction, testing and evaluation of students and,
 - 3) be knowledgeable concerning current national standards, national registration, and the requirements for state certification.

2. Education Group Medical Director

- a) Responsibilities - The education group medical director shall be responsible for all medical aspects of the education group, including but not limited to:
- 1) functioning as the medical authority regarding course content and to review and approve medical content of utilized curricula,
 - 2) granting authority to students-in-training for performance of course clinical and/or field internship requirements,
 - 3) participating in the evaluation of education group instructional quality and,
 - 4) Function in cooperation involvement with the education group director.
- b) Qualifications - The education group medical director:
- 1) shall be a physician holding an active Colorado license.
 - 2) should have knowledge of the delivery of out-of-hospital emergency care, including the proper care and transport of patients, medical direction, and quality improvement in out-of-hospital care.

3. Education Group Faculty

- a) Responsibilities - The education group faculty shall:
- 1) provide content or facilitate learning which meets the goals and objectives of the course,
 - 2) participate in the evaluation of education group instructional quality,
 - 3) function in cooperation with the education group director and medical director.
 - 4) In each location where students are assigned for didactic or clinical instruction or supervised practice, there shall be instructional faculty designated to coordinate supervision and provide frequent assessments of the students' progress in achieving acceptable program requirements.
- b) Qualifications

- 1) The faculty shall be knowledgeable in course content and effective in teaching their assigned subjects, and capable through academic preparation, training and experience to teach the courses or topics to which they are assigned.

C. Curriculum

1. The curriculum shall ensure the achievement of course goals and learning objectives. Instruction shall be an appropriate sequence of classroom, laboratory, clinical, and field/internship activities, as necessitated by the course.
2. Continuing education topic presentations
 - a) Continuing education topics shall be relevant to the EMS Provider level for which the topic is intended. Presentations may include content on various EMS Provider levels to facilitate interaction between providers.
 - b) Topic selection should include content on core concepts, enrichment of core concepts, and/or on new developments in the EMS Provider's level practice. Topic selection should be determined, in part, by local quality improvement needs of practicing providers.
 - c) Education group may review and approve outside sources of continuing education. Records shall be kept by the program for any approval of education not presented by the program.
3. Refresher, transition, IV course presentations, and waiver courses
 - a) Instructional content of these courses shall include all objectives and course requirements in any applicable current State or national minimum curriculum, including a module that covers the course-relevant EMS Provider scope of practice as defined in the current 6 CCR 1015-3, Chapter 2, (Rules Pertaining to EMS Practice and Medical Director Oversight). EMS Provider refresher courses may be tailored to meet requirements of both National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) and Colorado EMS Provider certificate renewal.
 - b) Students shall complete all defined minimum course or class requirements for successful completion.

D. Resource Assessment

The education group shall, at least annually, assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the resources described in these standards. The results of resource assessment shall be the basis for ongoing planning and appropriate change. An action plan shall be developed when deficiencies are identified in the program resources. Implementation of the action plan shall be documented and results measured by ongoing resource assessment.

VII. Student and Graduate Evaluation/Assessment

A. Student Evaluation

1. Each course providing renewal or refresher education or educational content beyond entry-level competence shall evaluate students to assure that competency is achieved.
2. Continuing education courses are not required to, but may evaluate student competency.
3. Documentation
 - a) Records of student evaluations shall be maintained in sufficient detail to document learning progress and achievements.

VIII. Fair Practices

A. Publications and Disclosure

1. Announcements, catalogs, publications, and advertising shall accurately reflect the program offered.
2. The following information shall be provided to all applicants:
 - a) prerequisites for the course
 - b) admissions policies and practices
 - c) requirements for completion of the course
 - d) tuition/fees and other costs required to complete the course
 - e) policies and processes for withdrawal and for refunds of tuition/fees
3. The following minimum information shall be made known to all students:
 - a) academic calendar
 - b) student grievance procedure
 - c) criteria for successful completion of each segment of the course
 - d) policies and processes by which students may perform clinical work while enrolled in the program.

IX. Lawful and Non-discriminatory Practices

All activities associated with the education group, including student and faculty recruitment, student admission, and faculty employment practices, shall be non-discriminatory and in accord with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations. There shall be a faculty grievance procedure made known to all paid faculty.

X. Safeguards

- A. The health and safety of patients, students, and faculty associated with the educational activities of the students shall be adequately safeguarded.
- B. Medical control/accountability exists when there is unequivocal evidence that Emergency Medical Services Professionals are not operating as independent practitioners, and when Emergency Medical Services Professionals are under direct medical control or in a system utilizing standing orders where timely medical audit and review provide for quality assurance.

XI. Education Group Records

- A. Education group records shall be maintained in a safe and secure location at times.
- B. Satisfactory records shall be maintained for all students including, but not limited to:
 - a) student admission
 - b) advisement and counseling
 - c) evaluations
 - d) grades and credits
- C. Satisfactory records shall be maintained for all courses and classes including, but not limited to:
 - a) objectives
 - b) content or curriculum
 - c) attendance records
 - d) faculty
 - e) list of supplemental reference materials

XII. Substantive Change

The education group shall report substantive changes to the department within 90 days. Substantive changes include but are not limited to change in program status, medical director, sponsorship, or group director.

XIII. Agreements

There shall be a current written affiliation agreement or memorandum of understanding between the education group and all other entities that participate in the education of the students describing the relationship, role, and responsibilities between the education group and that entity.