

Policy Title: **PEER EDUCATORS I-IV / IDPH Lead instructors**

No. P - 7

Board approval: 9-12-19

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I. Policy

- A. An EMS education program shall only be conducted by an EMS System or an academic institution under the direction of the EMS System. Oversight, quality assurance and outcome measurement for all EMS education programs shall be the responsibility of the EMS MD and the EMS System Coordinator, with cooperation of the educational institution/program and lead instructors (EMS Rules Section 515.500)
- B. Source standards
1. National EMS Education Standards (current edition)
 2. National EMS Scope of Practice Model skills (2019)
 3. Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the Emergency Medical Services Professions (CoAEMSP)
 4. Additional course curricula required by IDPH and/or the Resource Hospital
- C. All NWC EMSS personnel shall be taught, tested, and/or have competency measured by qualified and competent educators using evidence-based content and methods of instruction that foster mutual respect and an active learning environment. Definitions of competency:
1. The measurable and observable knowledge, skills, ability and behaviors that a person demonstrates in order to perform responsibilities correctly and skillfully.
 2. The application of knowledge and the interpersonal, decision-making, and psychomotor skills expected for the practice role.
- D. EMS-related education for EMS personnel of all levels shall be coordinated by at least one approved Illinois Lead Instructor. A program that includes education, training, or CE for more than one type of EMS Personnel may use one EMS LI to coordinate the program. A single EMS LI may simultaneously coordinate more than one program or course. (Section 3.65 (b)(5) of the Act.

II. POSITION DESCRIPTION: PEER EDUCATOR

- A. A Peer Educator is a member of the NWC EMSS who has delegated authority from the EMS MD to conduct approved BLS or ALS instruction, skill competency measurements; agency-sponsored EMS continuing education that requires an IDPH site code, assist with or teach Instation CE classes or conduct entry-level EMS courses depending on their credentials and level of approval.
- B. This designation is NOT necessary for an educator who holds specialty knowledge and/or credentials to teach/monitor/measure competency in CPR (AHA), specialty rescue, extrication; annual blood borne pathogens (DICO) etc. from a nationally approved organization and or teach ePCR documentation using the System-approved software.
- C. **Levels of approval:** Each level is cumulative and builds on the one before
1. **Peer I: BLS skills** – Teach and/or measure competency of BLS Skills included in the National EMS Scope of Practice Model (2019) as adopted for the State of Illinois and Region IX and as delegated by the EMS MD or his designee under the supervision of a LI and in compliance with the NWC EMSS SOPs and Procedure Manual. This level of authorization is required for EMT and PM class lab preceptors for BLS skills and agency educators who conduct BLS (including Restraint) competency validations.
 2. **Peer II: ALS skills** – Teach and/or measure competency of BLS and ALS Skills included in the National EMS Scope of Practice Model (2019) as adopted for the State of Illinois and Region IX and as delegated by the EMS MD or his designee under the supervision of a LI and in compliance with the NWC EMSS SOPs and Procedure Manual. This level of authorization is required for the following:

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- a. PM student lab preceptors for ALS skills
 - b. Agency educators delegated to conduct the System-required quarterly airway skills competencies and/or agency-conducted ALS skills reviews
 - c. Agency educators delegated to assist with ALS skills/simulations or scenarios during in-station classes
 - d. Agency educators authorized to teach new ALS skills using materials prepared by the Resource Hospital after EMS MD or his designee's authorization (example: new glucose meters, i-gel roll-out)
 - e. PM student Field preceptors must be approved as at least a Peer II educator starting with the Fall 2019 class. There is no requirement that all Peer II educators must also become approved Field Preceptors. Paramedic Field Preceptors have very specific qualifications and education requirements specified by CoA that will continue to be spelled out in the Field Preceptor policy.
3. **Peer III:** May plan, organize, implement and evaluate System-approved entry level EMT and paramedic classes, agency-sponsored EMS-related CE requiring an IDPH site code that supplements the In-station CE Program, and assist with System entry labs within their professional scope of practice and as approved by the EMS MD. See table for full details.
 4. **Peer IV: Instation CE educator; ECRN course LI.** This level is also strongly recommended for entry level paramedic class LI. See table.

III. Peer Educator Practice Expectations

- A. Peer educators in the NWC EMSS are valued as instructors and are also expected to serve as role models characterizing best practice standards of excellence for their level of licensure. They must demonstrate core competencies that are the cornerstone to high quality learning and measurement experiences. These include but may not be limited to the ability to accurately teach to and measure all domains of learning within their scope of practice and span of authority and responsibility.

They shall also:

- B. Demonstrate the ability to embrace student diversity in all forms: race, ethnicity, gender identify, disability, socioeconomic background, ideology and personality traits.
- C. Accurately and effectively communicate with students and colleagues with many different experiences, ages, levels of education and literacy so learners effectively apply the content and principles contained in the National, State, and NWC EMS System standards of practice. This also includes maintaining effective communication with the Resource Hospital staff overseeing the education.
- D. Effectively quantify objective achievement and measure performance against System standards of practice.
- E. Document the CE hours awarded to each individual in a valid manner that is consistent with the System ethics policy for academic honesty.
- F. Maintain complete records of all educational offerings which, depending on the nature of the class or lab, may include lesson plans, objectives, content outlines, student handout materials, AV used or slide presentations, evaluation instruments, completed skill sheets, class attendance rosters with original signatures, and student evaluations. Specific expectations for documentary curricular materials will be specified in procedure.
- G. **Eligibility requirement/qualifications for Peer I – IV:** See table
- H. **Eligibility requirements for Illinois Lead Instructor:** The applicant shall meet at least the following minimum experience and education requirements and shall provide a written recommendation from the EMS MD of the primary EMS System affiliation (EMS Rules 515.700 Lead Instructor, 2018):

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1. Written recommendation from EMS MD of primary EMS System of affiliation
2. Current Illinois license as EMT, EMT-I, A-EMT, Paramedic, RN or physician
3. Four years of experience in EMS or Emergency Care
4. Two years of documented teaching experience
5. Documented EMS classroom teaching experience with a recommendation for LI Licensure by an EMS MD or licensed LI
6. Documented successful completion of the Illinois EMS Instructor Education Course or equivalent to the National Standard Curriculum for EMS Instructors as approved by the Department. Currently, this educational requirement is satisfied by passing the National Association of EMS Educator's IC1 Course.
7. Upon successful completion of eligibility requirements, a LI applicant may apply to Department through their affiliated EMS System RH.

I. **The EMS LI of record shall be responsible for the following:**

1. Ensuring that no EMS Education course begins until after the Department (IDPH) issues its formal written pre-approval, which shall be in the form of a numeric site code; and
2. Ensuring that all materials presented to participants comply with the national EMS education standards, as modified by the Department (IDPH), and are approved by the EMS System and the Department (IDPH). Methods of assessment or intervention that are not approved by both the EMS System and the Department (IDPH) shall not be presented (Source: Amended at 42 ILL. Reg. 17632, eff September 20, 2018).
3. **Materials to be submitted for site code approval** to the EMS MD (designee) and IDPH are specified in the IDPH EMS Rules. Example: Section 515.580 (See site code submission checklist):
 - a. Continuing education classes, seminars or other types of programs shall be approved by IDPH before being offered to all levels of EMS practitioners. An application for approval shall be submitted to IDPH by an EMS MD, on a form prescribed, prepared and furnished by IDPH, at least 60 days prior to the scheduled event. The application will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) Name of applicant, agency and address;
 - (2) LI's name, license number, address and contact information;
 - (3) Name and signature of the EMS MD and EMS System Coordinator;
 - (4) Type of education program;
 - (5) Dates, times, and location of the education program (submit schedule);
 - (6) Goals and objectives;
 - (7) Methods and materials, text books, and resources when applicable;
 - (8) Content consistent with the national EMS education standards;
 - (9) Description of evaluation instruments; and
 - (10) Requirements for successful completion, when applicable.

IV. **General QUALIFICATIONS:** In order to be considered for PEER EDUCATOR status, an EMT, paramedic, PHRN or RN must receive a written recommendation from an authorized administrator from the agency/hospital of employment. Each candidate must provide evidence of the following:

- A. Current unencumbered license as an EMT, paramedic, PHRN, or RN in the State of Illinois.

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- B. EMS practice privileges in good standing with no suspensions or encumbrances based on failure to meet performance objectives, or multiple sustained complaints/trends in QI data that suggest poor practice within the past year.
- C. **The following characteristics:**
1. A desire to teach
 2. Willingness to be an educator
 3. A non-judgmental attitude toward co-workers
 4. Assertiveness to stand for evidence-based best practice care
 5. Flexibility to change and ability to adapt to new situations and standards
 6. Excellent communication skills
 7. Positive attitude toward patient care and adherence to System standards
 8. Good to excellent critical thinking and interpersonal skills (emotional intelligence)
 9. Patience
- D. **Documented teaching/mentoring experience**, i.e., CPR instructor, FF instructor certification, Illinois-recognized EMS Lead Instructor, ACLS/BTLS/PHTLS instructor, community education, assisting with skill competencies, teaching within the EMS Agency, assisting with System training programs and/or previous experience successfully precepting EMS students/nurses. For full list of teaching options see Con-Ed policy.
- E. **Comprehensive knowledge** of the principles and concepts included in National EMS Education Standards with respect to the topics they are to teach.
1. They must demonstrate the ability to accurately interpret, explain and defend the SOPs, Policies, and Procedures within their scope of practice.
 2. Demonstrated competency in teaching/skills verification and/or approved preceptor or preceptor eligible
 3. Each Peer educator must be validated by the NWC EMSS when any new equipment/skills are introduced so they are able to serve as the SME (subject matter expert) for their agency: BLS for all; ALS skills as applicable.
- V. **Procedure for Peer Educator Approval:**
- A. **Complete a Peer Educator Application on a form issued by the EMS System and posted to the System website (similar to the one used for Field Preceptors), listing professional experience and educator credentials; desired level of recognition; an inventory statement as to why they wish to serve as a Peer Educator in the NWC EMSS and agency recommendation/authorization signature. For Peer II, III and IV candidates: Submit to assigned hospital EMSC/educator for their verification of eligibility. Submit completed application to EMS secretary that facilitates EMT, Paramedic and CE classes. Current contact: Pam Ross (pross@nch.org) or call 847-618-4482 for direction. When the file is complete, the candidate will be scheduled to attend the appropriate education/ competency measurement experiences.**
- B. **Peer I: Attendance at an NCH EMT class with a scheduled lab in which the EMT LI shall validate teaching and measurement competency for select BLS skills to include: BLS airways, O₂ delivery; application of CPAP; in-line nebulization of bronchodilators; restraint competency; eye irrigation; and spine motion restriction.**
- C. **Peer II: Attendance at a System Entry or specially held Peer II Educator skills lab where the Resource Hospital CE Coordinator or designee shall validate teaching and measurement competency for select ALS skills to include:**
1. DAI using King Vision, channeled blade and bougie (drugs: ketamine, etomidate, midazolam, and fentanyl); insertion and monitoring of i-gel airways
 2. Bougie assisted surgical cric

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3. IO: tibial and proximal humerus sites (unconscious and conscious pt - use of lidocaine prm)
4. 12 L ECG lead placement; tracing acquisition; interpretation of ischemia/ infarction
5. Dynamic ECG rhythm identification and treatment transitioning between pages of SOP – adaptive competence
6. Pit crew approach to cardiac arrest management using quality high perfusion CPR, ResQPod, capnography, real-time CPR feedback device, apneic oxygenation, BLS to ALS airways, appropriate ventilation technique, immediate and delayed defibrillation; vascular access, drug administration (epinephrine/ amiodarone); minimizing pauses in compressions for rhythm check/defib; dual sequential defibrillation, consideration of the Hs and Ts; recognition and treatment of ROSC; mixing and titrating a norepinephrine drip
7. Needle pleural decompression

To be approved as a PM Student Field Preceptor or PM lab preceptor, all new candidates after 9-1-19 must first be recognized as a Peer II educator and then meet the additional requirements for Field Preceptor designation if that is the level of recognition desired.

Previously approved Peer II lab preceptors and Field Preceptors are grandfathered in and are exempt from these new requirement if they have maintained active EMS licensure and are up to date with all NWC EMSS CE and mandatory competencies. If inactive from a field preceptor or lab preceptor role for 2 years or longer, NWC EMSS EMS CE is not current, or competency validation is requested by the EMS MD, the individual will be evaluated on a case by case basis for a reinstatement plan.

- D. **Peer III:** Provide evidence of meeting LI qualifications to append to the Peer Educator file. Submit a class site code request with all required documents to the EMS Administrative Director for review and approval. Schedule an on-site evaluation with the Administrative Director or designee when a NWC EMSS educator can audit a class conducted by the Peer III candidate. (An oral interview with the EMS MD may also be required)
 - E. **Peer IV:** Provide evidence of RN and Lead Instructor licensure. Attend at least one in-station class conducted by the Administrative Director or CE Coordinator to observe the expected approach to teaching. Team teach at least one class with the CE Coordinator. Conduct at least one in-station class that is evaluated by the Administrative Director or CE Coordinator.
 - F. Peer III and IV candidate's applications will be reviewed by a panel composed of the EMS Administrative Director, CE Coordinator, and EMS MD in consultations with the assigned hospital EMS Coordinator for the appropriateness of the candidate based on their qualifications and adherence to recommended guidelines.
 - G. In the event a concern is raised that a candidate may not be qualified or appropriate based on the guidelines, a discussion shall take place between EMS Administrative Director and the Chief/EMS Director or his designee or the ED Director to clarify the objections and reach consensus. The EMS MD has the ultimate decision-making authority as to whether to accept or deny a candidate.
 - H. **Peer educator certificates:** Upon completion of their file, demonstrated compliance with all requirements, and role competency measurements, each approved candidate will be given a Peer Educator Recognition certificate noting the level of approval with a four year recognition period. Their status shall be logged in the System Peer Educator database.
 - I. The **Peer Educator database** shall be shared with PEMSCs and Hospital EMSCs on a regular basis when updates are made so they are informed of changes in a timely manner.
- VI. **Maintaining Peer Educator Status**
- A. Peer educator designation shall be granted for four years. All previously recognized Peer Educators still active within the NWC EMSS will be grandfathered in to the new requirements and given an expiration date 4 years from the date of policy approval unless

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the EMS MD requests a re-validation of competency due to inactive status as an educator or extended LOA. All System-affiliated and Independent Peer Educators must have documented evidence of attending the most recent SOP roll-out class.

- B. Each Peer educator must maintain their Illinois EMS license in good standing. They must fulfill annual CE requirements mandated by law, rule or System policy for their level of licensure. If a Peer Educator with NWC EMSS practice privileges has their EMS license and/or practice privileges suspended or they are on inactive status, their educator credentials shall also be suspended or inactive and reinstated when their EMS privileges are reinstated. Reinstatement may require additional educator competency measurement depending on the duration of the suspended/inactive status. Peer Educators who are not active members of the NWC EMSS must maintain annual NWC EMSS CE requirements and annual competency measures.
- C. **Peer educator renewal requirements:** Submit proof of classes taught to their assigned hospital EMS Coordinator/educator (attendance logs) prior to completion of the reverification process
1. **Peer I (BLS Skills):** Teach at least one BLS skill session/class annually and at least four different skills over a four year period
 2. **Peer II (BLS + ALS skills):** Teach at least one ALS skill session/class annually and at least four different skills over a four year period.
 3. **Peer III:** Conduct at least one educational offering in each calendar year.
 4. **Peer IV:** Conduct at least 1 Instation CE class in 9 of the 10 months in each of the academic calendar years in the current recognition period.
 5. If the peer educator has not successfully fulfilled performance expectations as stated in the educator agreement, opportunities for improvement will be documented in writing in the form of a corrective action plan and provided to the individual, an administrative representative of their employer, the EMS MD, EMS Administrative Director, and CE Coordinator.
- D. All educators are subject to unannounced assessments at least once a year, and more frequently for cause, by the EMS Administrative Director, CE Coordinator or EMS MD.

VII. **MECHANISM FOR OBTAINING A WAIVER**

In cases of demonstrated hardship to the EMS Agency, candidates with strong performance records who do not meet all peer educator qualifications may seek a waiver and temporary privileges to perform as a Peer educator while the person is working towards meeting all the criteria. Waiver requests should be submitted to the EMS Administrative Director.

References

- DPH 77 ILLINOIS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 515 SUBCHAPTER f; Section 515.700 Lead Instructor Committee on Accreditation of EMS Programs (CoAEMSP) Interpretations of the CAAHEP Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in the EMS Professions; Approved 2019.
- NAEMSE. (2020). Foundations of education an EMS approach (3rd edition) (Abrahamson and McKenna Eds). Burlington: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- National Association of State EMS Directors (now NASEMSO). (2010). EMS Instructor Qualifications: Accessed on line: www.nasemso.org
- Charlotte Danielson's FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING.