



**NORTHWEST
COMMUNITY
EMERGENCY
MEDICAL
SERVICES
SYSTEM**

Emergency Communications Registered Nurse (ECRN) Course Student **POLICIES** - 2023

Course description

The Northwest Community Emergency Medical Services System (NWC EMSS) Emergency Communications Registered Nurse (ECRN) course presents components of the National EMS Education Standards with an emphasis on applying these principles to the role of an ECRN using System standards of Practice: NWC EMSS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policies, and procedures in compliance with the Illinois EMS Act and Administrative Rules. The course is facilitated by the NWC EMSS EMS Administrative Director (Connie Mattera) and is assisted by Educators from the EMS Department and System hospitals.

Registration and tuition

Course applications and verification of ECG course completion must be received in the NWC EMSS office prior to commencement of class so a student file can be opened.

Tuition: \$200.00 payable to Northwest Community Hospital; cost center 33015-620065

Payment is due on or before the first day of class unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance with the course facilitator.

Course Prerequisites

- Current unrestricted license as a registered professional nurse in the State of Illinois.
- An employee in good standing at a System hospital **who has completed their probationary period** in the emergency department.
- Successful completion of an ECG interpretation course or ECG interpretation competency. Such a course should include recognition of dysrhythmias and 12 L ECGs. Attach written documentation of successful completion/competency measurement to the application.
- Completion of the 4 SOP self-assessments and submission to your hospital's EMS Coordinator for grading and submission to Connie Mattera prior to that content delivery in class.

Course content delivery

All classes will be conducted virtually via Zoom. The expectation is that all participants will attend concurrently. A recording link will be sent to all after class for those that need to listen to the content asynchronously or wish to review the material.

Electronic device, internet requirements and Zoom etiquette for classes:

- Individuals must have a reliable laptop or desktop computer with camera and speaker capabilities (do not use a cell phone unless needed for camera as a secondary device) and a reliable high speed internet connection that will allow them to log in to a Zoom meeting.
- Know which search engines work best for full access for your device and internet plan. Have a working hot spot or Wi-Fi that can be accessed as a backup plan. Please ensure that your computer is fully charged or plugged in for continuous power throughout the class.
- Find a clean, quiet space (not in bed) and dress appropriately. You will be asked to stand from time to time so ensure that you are dressed appropriately above (and below) the usual camera view.
- Faculty must clearly see each room space and participant on a video feed throughout the class to ensure engagement and pick up on visual learning cues. The participant's video window must not be minimized or blacked out unless requested to do so by the faculty, and must be in the forefront at all times.
- Make sure your full name shows up appropriately on your participant screen.
- Optimize lighting so you can be easily seen

- **Familiarize yourself with the tools for electronically engaging in the class via ZOOM** such as how to mute and unmute your microphone; turn the video camera on and off; how to text or type to participate in the chat and annotation features (including text and stamps); and enter a reaction. This will be different on a Microsoft vs. Apple product. We will be using these applications to discuss case studies, role play through calls, create mind or concept maps, and participate in virtual ball toss and “go round” checks for understanding. We will also use the chat feature as a discussion board, seek feedback and your opinion on posed problems,
- **Mute until you are required to talk.**
- Let all household members know when and where you will be in class and ask them not to disturb you if possible.
- Silence cell phone and close other windows on your computer. Frequent breaks will be provided to respond to other messages.
- **Stay engaged!** Maintain eye contact with the faculty and listen to the class audio at all times.
- Be prepared to take notes.

Don'ts – Please do not:

- Take screenshots, cell phone pictures, or otherwise record the class, other participants, or faculty members without express permission to do so.
- Change your name or change your zoom background during the meeting.
- Use creative/customized electronic backgrounds as they are often busy or distracting and take up additional bandwidth.
- Walk around, complete activities of daily living, engage in personal grooming activities on screen, exercise, or drive during the class.
- Use the chat for side conversations with classmates.
- Sit in front of a window or bright light; this will make your face too dark to see.
- Have conversations with household members or pets off camera.
- Allow household members or pets to walk around behind you or sit on your lap during the class except for brief times of necessity.
- Engage in texting, social media, gaming, other work, or other distractions while in class.
- Wear headphones to listen to alternate inputs (music, etc.) during class. You will be randomly called on to unmute and provide verbal responses. It is embarrassing to be distracted and not respond when called upon to answer.

Needed Resources during class

Print the following from the System website (www.nwcemss.org) and/or have written copies available to from your hospital EMS Coordinator or a split screen option for electronic access during class: On the System website, click on the Standards of Practice tab for access to all these documents.

- 2022 NWC EMSS Standard Operating Procedures
- EMS Policy Manual – policies to be discussed are listed electronically in advance and are available on the System's EMS website..
- EMS Procedure Manual
- Print the class handouts sent electronically prior to class so you can follow along and take notes during each presentation.

Attendance and CEU credits

Attendance at all classes is strongly encouraged to optimize learning opportunities but is not mandatory from the System's perspective. Please confirm your employer's attendance expectations before class begins. Please log in 15 minutes before class to have time to troubleshoot connectivity issues. Attendance will be taken periodically throughout the day to confirm CEU hours. Communicate with the instructor (via email if you will be absent, late, or if you lose your connection during class. Students are held to knowing all content covered in each class whether attended or not. Continuing education (CE) credits will only be awarded for class hours attended live.

Class outcomes and passing criteria

Students must demonstrate at least minimum acceptable mastery of all cognitive, psychomotor and affective objectives as measured by the final written and practical examinations, and direct observation.

Testing Competency measurements

Final Written exam: 150 multiple choice questions blueprinted to the entire SOP.

Final Practical exam

- ECG rhythm exam: Allowed one min/strip to identify 15 rhythms; may miss no lethal rhythms
- Simulated cardiac run (dysrhythmia or HF mgt progresses to a cardiac arrest)
- Simulated medical run (patient with sepsis or stroke alert)
- Simulated respiratory run (asthma/COPD, anaphylaxis, upper or lower respiratory infection)
- Simulated trauma run: Must be able to calculate an accurate GCS and determine appropriate trauma center destination per Region triage protocols

Testing deadlines: Students are allowed up to 31 days following the last day of class to take and pass the final written exam, ECG rhythm interpretation exam, and all practical exam stations with their own hospital EMS Coordinator.

Extensions may be granted based on individual extenuating circumstances. If a nurse fails to successfully complete any portion of the exams within one month following the last day of class and has not been granted an extension, they will receive a failing grade for the course.

GRADING CRITERIA: Participants must achieve a minimum of 80% on each component (and no lethal errors on the ECG strip test).

Retest option: If a candidate scores <80% or misses a lethal rhythm on the first attempt, one retake of each component is allowed. No retakes of the written or ECG interpretation exam on the day of initial testing are allowed. Remediation is required before a second attempt.

If a student fails to meet the criteria for successful course completion, the following options are available:

- Repeat the course at a later time
- Attend educational offerings addressing the areas of ongoing learning need and challenge the written and practical exams again in their entirety.
- Complete the provisions of a corrective action plan agreed to by the participant, their employer and the EMS Administrative Director

Interim status: A nurse is not authorized to direct prehospital care until all course requirements are successfully achieved.

Tutoring is available and encouraged for those finding it difficult to master course objectives. You may either schedule dates and times with the course facilitator or your hospital's EMSC.

Passing all exam components confers **Provision ECRN status** with temporary on-line medical control (OLMC) privileges while under the direct preceptorship of a licensed ECRN or physician.

Field observation experience

A Provisional ECRN must be scheduled by their hospital EMS Coordinator (HEMSC) to ride as an observer with an EMS Provider Agency on an ALS ambulance within the NWC EMSS for a minimum of one eight hour shift. During this time, the nurse must observe at least one Advanced Life Support (ALS) call. If this is not achieved during the initial shift, the nurse must be rescheduled for one additional shift. They may leave as soon as an ALS run is completed on the second shift day. If they do not observe an ALS run during the second shift, contact the EMS Administrative Director and an alternative method will be negotiated to achieve the field observation objectives. The experience must be documented on the Field Observation Form provided by the System and be provided to the EMS Administrative Director along with the ECRN candidate's Internship portfolio.

On line Medical Control Internship

Upon successful completion of all course testing requirements, the Provisional ECRN may begin a precepted OLMC internship and build a portfolio of competency measurements that justify a recommendation for ECRN licensure with the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Opening a file: Each provisional ECRN must make an appointment to meet with their HEMSC or designated alternate to open a file prior to commencing the internship. During this meeting, the HEMSC/Educator will review the provisional internship process and that hospital's expectations.

Scope of practice: No provisional ECRN has independent OLMC privileges. During the internship, each Provisional ECRN is to provide OLMC within the System standards of practice as defined by the NWC EMSS SOPs, policies and procedure manual while under the **direct** supervision of an ECRN preceptor or an approved ED physician who **must be present throughout each call, and approve all orders**. Supervision is interpreted as approving the provisional ECRN's orders to protect patient safety and coaching as necessary, but **not taking over the call**. Those runs where orders were initiated by someone other than the provisional ECRN DO NOT qualify as acceptable in building the portfolio demonstrating ECRN competency.

The preceptor must co-sign all Communication logs documented by the Provisional ECRN.

Time requirements: The internship shall be completed when all objectives are achieved. While there is no minimum time frame, the maximum allowable time is 12 months from the date of successful testing unless a written extension request is submitted and approved.

Internship requirements:

- Each ECRN candidate must complete a minimum of 10 ALS calls of varying natures (2 each: respiratory, cardiac, medical emergencies, trauma, and peds). Communications Logs and ECG strips that have been redacted of all Protected Health Information (PHI) under HIPAA must be submitted to the hospital EMSC/Educator at least one week prior to the summative assessment meeting. Pediatric calls may be simulated if an actual call of this nature was not completed.

Meeting: The ECRN candidate must meet at least once with the HEMSC to evaluate the nurse's progress and/or assess if all objectives have been met to recommend ECRN licensure. **If the runs are evaluated as unsatisfactory**, a corrective action plan shall be developed with time frames for achievement in order to complete the internship.

COMPLETION OF THE INTERNSHIP – Paperwork submission to Resource Hospital

- Cover letter** from the HEMSC recommending ECRN licensure
- Certification check list:**
- Scan and submit at least 10 Communications logs for ALS runs as specified above. Attach ECG and ETCO₂ strips.
- Summative Performance Appraisal:** Completed and signed
- Field experience form:** Completed and signed
- Completed, legible, and signed **IDPH Personal History Form (Child Support Statement)** (mandated per EMS Act and Rules).
- Do NOT send payment. Licensure fees shall all be paid online.

Extensions: If an extension is needed beyond the 12 month period, a written extension request must be submitted by the provisional ECRN to the EMS Administrative Director at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the provisional period. Any nurse who completes the internship after an extension may be required to complete additional testing.

RECOGNITION of ECRN STATUS

If all objectives are achieved and approval is granted by the EMS Administrative Director or designee, the ECRN candidate will be recommended for ECRN licensure per Illinois Rules and System policy. The nurse will receive a license from IDPH with an ECRN number and expiration date. Employing hospitals may require that an ECRN provide them with a copy of the license. Individuals are strongly encouraged to keep the original in a place that allows for easy retrieval. Nurses who hold an ECRN license may use the designation "ECRN" as part of their professional credentials.