

Legislative Analysis



EMS INSTRUCTOR-COORDINATOR: REVISE QUALIFICATIONS

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House Bill 6300 (Substitute H-1)
Sponsor: Rep. Dave Hildenbrand
Committee: Health Policy

First Analysis (9-15-06)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would allow, among other things, a medical first responder to be licensed as an emergency medical services instructor-coordinator.

FISCAL IMPACT: Revising the licensure requirements for an emergency medical services (EMS) instructor-coordinator as proposed in House Bill 6300 (H-1) will have no fiscal impact as any increase in licensure fees realized as a result of the revisions will more than likely be offset by increased administrative costs for the Department of Community Health. There are currently 927 individuals licensed as EMS instructor-coordinators.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The problem that this proposed legislation is attempting to address concerns a licensed emergency medical services provider who was denied a license as an emergency medical services (EMS) instructor-coordinator. As background information, in the field of emergency medical services, a person who is licensed at a specific level (medical first responder, EMT, EMT technician, or paramedic) may only provide the level of emergency medical services that the ambulance, fire department, or other emergency medical services agency he or she is employed by or volunteers with is licensed to provide. For example, a paramedic riding in an ambulance licensed to provide basic life support services may only render care that falls within the scope of basic life support, even though he or she is trained and licensed to provide advanced life support services.

The gentleman in question is licensed as an emergency medical technician (EMT) but had been employed with a fire department that is licensed only to provide medical first responder services, a lower level of emergency medical services than the basic life support that he, as an EMT, has been trained to provide. The current license requirements in the Public Health Code specify that a license as an EMS instructor-coordinator will only be granted to a person who, at the time of application, is licensed as an EMT, EMT specialist, or paramedic with at least three years' field experience as an EMT, although the license application says that the field experience can be with a licensed life support agency. The gentleman's license application was denied because, although he is licensed as an EMT, his field experience is rated at the level his employer is licensed to provide – medical first response services; medical first responders cannot at this time be licensed as instructor-coordinators.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Public Health Code (MCL 333.20950) to make several revisions to the qualifications for licensure as an emergency medical services instructor-coordinator as follows:

- Include a medical first responder in the list of EMS personnel eligible for licensure as an EMS instructor-coordinator.
- Require the three years' field experience required for licensure as an EMS instructor-coordinator to be with a licensed life support agency and performed when the applicant was licensed as a medical first responder, emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician specialist, or paramedic.
- Require the instructor-coordinator license to specify the level of instruction-coordination the individual is licensed to provide.
- Prohibit an EMS instructor-coordinator from instructing or coordinating emergency medical training courses at a level that exceeded his or her designated level of licensure and for which he or she did not have at least three years' field experience at that level of licensure.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

An EMS instructor-coordinator provides training for those seeking licensure as a medical first responder, emergency medical technician (EMT), EMT specialist, or paramedic. The bill would address the problem discussed earlier by allowing a person licensed as a medical first responder to apply for licensure as an emergency medical services instructor-coordinator and by allowing the Department of Community Health to accept as the person's field experience his work with a medical first response service. Also, under the bill, an instructor-coordinator could only teach or coordinate classes at the level he or she was licensed at and then only if he or she had at least three years field experience at that level. An EMS instructor-coordinator license would have to specify the level of instruction the person could provide. Thus, a person licensed as a medical first responder could only teach courses at the medical first responder level, and so forth. However, the bill's provisions will enable those with more advanced licensure, but whose employers are themselves licensed at a lower level of emergency medical services, to still teach at their full level of licensure if they had at least three years of field experience at that higher level at some point in their careers.

Against:

It would seem preferable to allow people to teach emergency medical services courses only at the level at which they are currently working or have recently worked at. After all, practice enables people to keep their skills sharp. Wouldn't an EMT or paramedic who had only worked as a medical first responder for a while lose some of their expertise?

Response:

In order to renew a license as an emergency medical services provider, a person must keep up certain certifications, such as basic or advanced cardiac life support, and complete continuing education courses (some of which include hands-on procedures) or complete refresher courses. Therefore, the process to maintain a license as an EMT, EMT specialist, or paramedic keeps a licensee's skills honed, even if the person cannot practice certain services on a regular basis.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Community Health indicated support for the bill. (9-12-06)

A representative of the Plainfield Township Fire Department testified in support of the bill. (9-12-06)

The Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs indicated support for the bill. (9-12-06)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.