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Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health

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Dear Massachusetts certified EMT–Intermediate,

As you may be aware, there are many changes taking place in EMS, both nationally and within Massachusetts. We have been working to identify the best strategies to provide the highest level and quality of care to our state’s residents and visitors, and then to communicate accurately what options are available.

As you also may know, the EMT-Intermediate level is not part of the National EMS Scope of Practice Model, and therefore not part of the National EMS Education Standards (national standards). Instead, there is a new level of EMS provider – the Advanced EMT (AEMT) – in its place. Under these new standards, the Advanced EMT has a broader array of skills in his or her scope of practice, and can provide patients a better set of care options than the EMT-Intermediate. We at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Office of Emergency Medical Services (DPH/OEMS) clearly understand and support the many patient care advantages to providing the higher level of care of the AEMT, and are hopeful many Massachusetts EMT-Intermediates will choose to attain this new level of certification, which Massachusetts will also be adopting. The transition from EMT-Intermediate to Advanced EMT will take some time and effort, but we believe that in the long term it is in the best interest of patient care to do so.

The transition from EMT-Intermediate to Advanced EMT will be much more difficult than the transition for EMT-Basics or EMT-Paramedics to meet the new national standards for their levels, “EMT” and “Paramedic,” because unlike for the latter two levels, large gaps exist between the two very different curricula. The gap between the 27-year-old EMT-I 1985 curriculum, the basis for EMT-Intermediate certification in Massachusetts, and the new AEMT educational standards, is quite large.

However, it is very important for Massachusetts to align with national certification levels despite the difficulty in doing so – both for standardization and professionalization, but also better patient care. In recent years, there have been dozens of different certification levels

within the United States, and the effort to move all states to the national standards will professionalize our certification levels across the nation. It is important for Massachusetts to be part of this effort. We also believe that the breadth and scope of practice of the AEMT provides a higher knowledge base, which is highly beneficial to our EMS patients.

As Massachusetts EMTs at all levels make the transition into the nationally recognized certification levels, additional training will be required to assure that any gaps in knowledge or skill is adequately addressed. As already noted, for the other certification levels, the educational course is not extensive, as there is a much smaller gap between the current curricula and the new standards. This is not the case with the transition from EMT-Intermediate to AEMT. This level will require a larger transition course and a cognitive exam to certify entry level competency as an AEMT. No test is required at the EMT or paramedic certification levels to complete the transition.

DPH/OEMS will work with Massachusetts accredited training institutions to provide transition courses to assist those EMT-Intermediates wishing to take on this challenge and seek AEMT certification. These courses will be awarded credit and satisfy **all** training requirements for EMT recertification during the period in which they were taken – without the need for taking the traditional refresher and continuing education courses. After successfully completing the transition course, the EMT-Intermediate will need to take a National Registry of EMTs (NREMT) AEMT computer-based cognitive skills exam. DPH/OEMS, working in collaboration with the NREMT, will be able to provide a one-time test "voucher" (or similar) for any EMT-Intermediates wishing to make this transition to AEMT. Any EMT-Intermediates not wishing to transition to the AEMT level may recertify as Massachusetts EMTs-Basics (the NREMT EMT level), which does not require any testing.

EMT-Intermediates who successfully transition to the AEMT level will gain NREMT AEMT certification as well as Massachusetts AEMT certification. Although Massachusetts can only provide a one-time voucher for the required cognitive examination, a total of six attempts will be allowed to successfully transition.

The transition timeline for EMT-Intermediates will begin following the 2014 recertification cycle and give each recertification group a **full two-year period** in which to successfully transition from Intermediate to AEMT. The chart below may provide additional clarity to this process.

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DPH/OEMS is firmly committed to this new AEMT certification level, and the improved level of care it will provide is to our EMS systems and patients, and we are hopeful that many EMT-Intermediates will successfully transition to it during their next certification cycle. We will work with EMT-Intermediates, current Intermediate-level ambulance services and accredited training institutions to assist in making this process as efficient and inexpensive as possible.

We will be providing more information on our website, [www.mass.gov/dph/oems](http://www.mass.gov/dph/oems), and through email in upcoming weeks. If you have any immediate questions, please contact me at [Jamie.Pianka@state.ma.us](mailto:Jamie.Pianka@state.ma.us) . I am hopeful we will be able to take this and many other steps together to improve our profession and EMS in Massachusetts.

Respectfully,