



Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D., Commissioner

Nathan Deal, Governor

2 Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30303-3159
www.dch.georgia.gov

Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response ♦ J. Patrick O'Neal, MD, Director
Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma ♦ Robert Keith Wages, Director
2600 Skyland Drive – Lower Level, Atlanta Georgia 30319
Phone: 404-679-0547 – Fax: 404-679-0526

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Dear EMS Colleagues:

On November 24, 2009, the Georgia EMS Advisory Council (EMSAC) voted unanimously to recommend the Georgia Office of EMS and Trauma (OEMS) implement the new National EMS Education Standards and National EMS Scope of Practice including the adoption of the new levels of EMS personnel. Subsequent to EMSAC's action, the EMS Medical Directors Advisory Council (EMSMDAC) also endorsed this recommendation.

Based on the recommendations from EMSAC and EMSMDAC, the OEMS, in conjunction with representatives of the EMS community, has been working to implement the new Scopes of Practice, National EMS Education Standards and levels of EMS personnel. This process has required extensive input from EMS Educators, EMS Directors and Medical Directors, Regional EMS Program Directors, Technical Colleges, the Georgia Association of EMS (GAEMS), the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT), and the Committee on Accreditation of Educational Programs for the EMS Professions (CoAEMSP) as well as many others. At the state level, **Mickey Moore**, Deputy Director, and **Jill Mabley, MD**, Medical Director, have provided tremendous leadership during every phase of this transition, and they have been instrumental in guiding this initiative from its inception to its implementation. In addition, **Jassene Williams** and **Dwight Strickland** with the OEMS have provided invaluable guidance with respect to the details of the licensure process, and I cannot thank them enough for their contributions.

Dr. Mabley, Mickey and I are especially grateful to **David Newton** of Gwinnett Technical College, who serves as Chair of the EMS Education Transition Committee, for his dedication and leadership throughout this process. Without his contributions, this transition would not have been possible, and words cannot adequately convey our appreciation to David. In addition, I would be remiss if I did not express our sincere thanks and appreciation to **Steve Moyers**, Dean of Health Sciences at Gwinnett Technical College, for supporting David's participation in this project.

We also are very appreciative of the support and guidance we have received from the Georgia Association of EMS Board of Directors. GAEMS is a staunch advocate not only for the EMS profession, but also for public protection, and we are proud of our partnership with GAEMS. **Courtney Terwilliger**, Chair, GAEMS Board of Directors; **Lee Oliver**, President, Directors Division; **T. Jeff Smith**, President, Providers Division; **Nita Ham**, President, Educators Division and **Robert Cox, MD**, President, Medical Directors Division have devoted countless hours to this initiative, and their counsel and contributions to this effort are immeasurable.

The following information is an explanation of the changes related to the standards and scopes of practice and of the processes necessary to implement those changes. As we move forward with the transition, we certainly understand you may have additional questions; however, we hope this information provides you with a thorough understanding of the status. As always, if you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact a representative of the Office of EMS and Trauma.

One change resulting from the transition is the titles of the EMT-Basic and EMT-Paramedic levels; however, the changes are minor. Another change is the addition of the new Advanced EMT level. In the near future, we will distribute specific information regarding that level.

The **new** levels of licensure in Georgia are as follows:

- **Emergency Medical Technician (replacing EMT-Basic)**
- **Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (new level)**
- **Paramedic (replacing EMT-Paramedic)**

NOTE: The Georgia Office of EMS and Trauma will continue to relicense individuals at the EMT-Intermediate and Cardiac Technician levels.

Another aspect of the transition is a slight modification to the scope of practice for each of the current levels of licensure. A detailed description of the scopes of practice is available on the OEMS website (www.ems.ga.gov). In order to implement the new scopes of practice, it is necessary for all licensed EMS personnel to complete a provider level-specific update prior to June 30, 2012. Specifically, all licensed EMS personnel will complete the “Scope of Practice for All Personnel Update” (1 hour) AND the level-specific update for the level at which they are currently licensed. Due to the varying degree of changes in scope for each level, the number of hours for the update at each level will vary slightly. Below is the current estimate of the length of the upgrades for each level (these hours estimates include the 1 hour for the Scope of Practice Update):

Provider Level Update	Estimated Hours to Complete
EMT-Basic → EMT	3
EMT-Intermediate → EMT-Intermediate	4
Cardiac Technician → Cardiac Technician	6
EMT-Paramedic → Paramedic	8

All updates will be available at no cost on the EMS Online Classroom (www.ems.ga.gov) and all hours will count toward the forty hours of required continuing education. Over the next few weeks, we will finalize the updates for all levels of licensure and add these updates to the EMS Online Classroom.

Currently, we are in the process of updating all Level 2 and Level 3 Instructors so that courses may begin in Fall Semester, and as a result of the tremendous response and cooperation from the EMS Instructors, we are making excellent progress on completing this phase of the transition.

The most significant change resulting from the new standards and scopes of practice involves the Emergency Medical Technician-Intermediate and Advanced EMT levels, and this issue has clearly generated the preponderance of questions from Georgia's EMS community. **The two most important points regarding the EMT-Intermediate and Advanced EMT levels are:**

- 1. A currently licensed EMT-Intermediate is NOT REQUIRED to upgrade to the Advanced EMT level, and**
- 2. Any currently licensed EMT-Intermediate who desires to upgrade to the Advanced EMT level must successfully complete a state approved bridge course and pass the NREMT Advanced EMT written examination.**

We believe that it is important for us not only to make EMS personnel aware of the policy, but also the rationale for the policy. In Georgia, there are approximately 10,000 individuals licensed at the EMT-Intermediate level. To require all of these licensed personnel to upgrade their license to a new level would place an undue burden on the individuals as well as on the EMS organizations that employ these individuals. In addition, for the state to upgrade an individual from one level of licensure to a significantly higher level without verification of competency at the higher level would be inappropriate from a public protection standpoint. After careful consideration of the facts and numerous discussions with EMS providers and educators, we are confident this policy best serves both the public and Georgia's EMS community.

The Office of EMS and Trauma will begin approving Advanced EMT courses immediately, provided the courses meet the requirements to teach the new level. Specifically, the Training Program Director and Lead Instructor must have updated his/her EMS Instructor License and submitted an application that includes the new National EMS Education Standards for the AEMT course.

We will continue to approve EMT-I courses until December 31, 2011. Any course that starts on or after January 1, 2012 must use the new standards. In other words, no EMT-I courses will be approved after December 31, 2011 and all courses after that date must meet the requirements for the AEMT level.

The National Registry will continue to offer the EMT-I examination until March 31, 2013. After that date, the EMT-I examination will not be available and all candidates will be required to meet the AEMT course standards and take the AEMT examination.

To reiterate, EMS personnel currently licensed as an EMT-Intermediate have two options to satisfy the update requirements:

Option 1: a currently licensed EMT-Intermediate may update his/her license as an EMT-I by completing the required 40 hours of continuing education, which must include the "EMT-I Update" and the "Scope of Practice for All Personnel Update" during the current license renewal cycle prior to June 30, 2012.

Option 2: a currently licensed EMT-Intermediate may upgrade his/her license to an Advanced EMT by successfully completing an “EMT-I to AEMT Bridge Course” AND the NREMT AEMT Written Examination prior to June 30, 2012.

NOTE: *If an EMT-Intermediate selects Option 2 in lieu of Option 1 as the means of satisfying the update requirement, the individual must complete the upgrade prior to June 30, 2012. Any licensed EMT-Intermediate who selects Option 1 may choose to upgrade his/her license to Advanced EMT at any time in the future.*

For your convenience, below are links to several websites that you may find useful.

Georgia Office of EMS and Trauma: www.ems.ga.gov

National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians: www.nremt.org

Committee on Accreditation of EMS Professionals: www.coaemsp.org

Georgia Association of EMS: www.ga-ems.com

NHTSA EMS: www.ems.gov

For a visual summary of the update process, please see the flowchart on the next page.

Again, we hope you find this information helpful in explaining the transition to the new education standards, scopes of practice and levels of licensure; however, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you so much for your cooperation and for your contributions to Georgia’s EMS system.

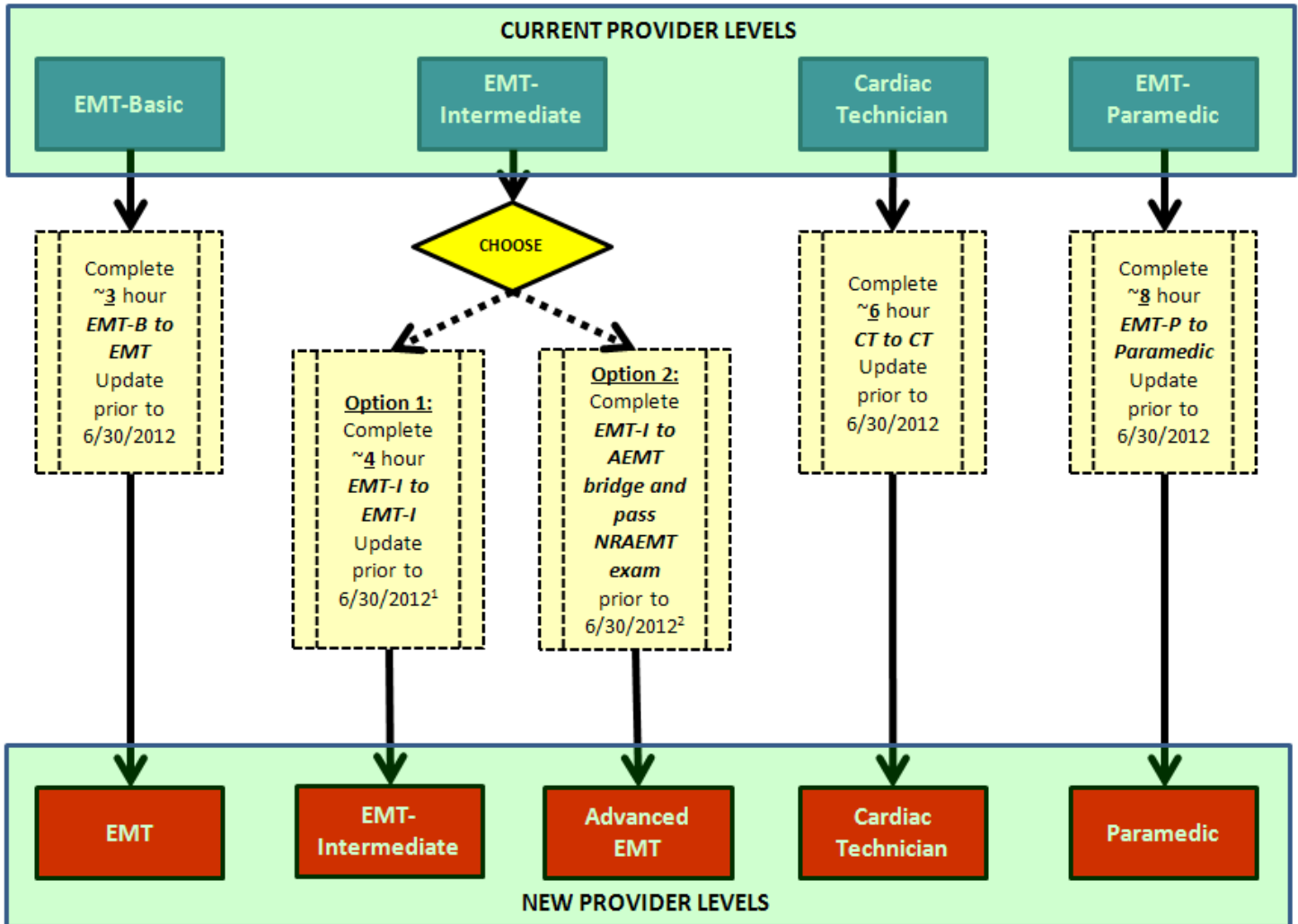
Best regards,

Keith

R. Keith Wages
Director
Office of EMS and Trauma
Georgia Department of Public Health
2600 Skyland Drive, Lower Level
Atlanta, GA 30319

2011 Georgia Provider Level Updates

Estimated hours for each provider level include the 1 hour Scope of Practice Update



¹ Any licensed EMT-Intermediate who selects Option 1 may choose to upgrade his/her license to Advanced EMT at any time in the future.

² If an EMT-Intermediate selects Option 2 in lieu of Option 1 as the means of satisfying the update requirement, the individual must complete the upgrade prior to June 30, 2012.