AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH’S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING REVISIONS TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEFINITIONS, CERTIFICATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes to the statutes on emergency medical services (EMS). Principally, it:

1. requires emergency medical technicians (EMTs), advanced EMTs, and emergency medical responders (EMRs), starting January 1, 2020, to obtain and renew their state certification by completing national training and examination requirements (§§ 12 & 13);

2. requires EMS instructors to obtain and renew their state certification in this manner by a date the Department of Public Health (DPH) determines (§ 13); and

3. allows a volunteer, hospital-based, or municipal ambulance service to apply to DPH to add a branch location to their primary service area and makes corresponding changes to application requirements (currently, they must undergo a hearing process through the department) (§ 5).

The bill also makes minor and technical changes to various EMS statutes, including (1) requiring EMS organizations to submit required data to DPH in electronic format, instead of also allowing written submissions; (2) requiring DPH to establish minimum training standards for all EMS personnel, instead of only EMTs; and (3) modifying the definition of “EMS organization” and substituting this term for “EMS provider” to update terminology.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

§§ 12 & 13 — NATIONAL CERTIFICATION FOR CERTAIN EMS PERSONNEL

Starting January 1, 2020, the bill generally requires applicants for EMR, EMT, or advanced EMT certification to obtain certification from a national organization for emergency medical certification in lieu of current state certification and licensure requirements. It requires applicants for EMS Instructor certification to do so starting at a date the DPH commissioner prescribes.

The bill defines the national organization for emergency medical certification (“national organization”) as a national organization, or its successor, that (1) the department approves and identifies on its website and (2) tests and certifies EMS personnel. (DPH approved and identified the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, a nonprofit organization that tests and certifies all levels of EMS personnel.)

Under current law, applicants for state certification must meet specified training requirements and pass written and practical examinations, as listed in Table 1 below.

Initial Certification

Under the bill, applicants for initial certification as an EMR, EMT, or advanced EMT must (1) complete an initial training program consistent with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s National EMS Education Standards for their respective profession and (2) pass the national organization’s examination for their respective profession or a DPH-approved examination. It removes the requirement under current law that these applicants have no pending disciplinary action or complaint against them.

The bill requires applicants for EMS instructor certification to:

1. hold a current EMT or advanced EMT certification or paramedic license in Connecticut;
2. complete an EMT instructor training program based on current national education standards within the prior two years;

3. complete 25 hours of teaching under the supervision of a certified EMS instructor;

4. pass written and practical examinations prescribed by DPH;

5. have no pending disciplinary action or complaints; and

6. by a date the DPH commissioner prescribes, maintain current EMT, advanced EMT, or paramedic certification from the national organization.

Under current law, such applicants must meet the initial certification requirements listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Current Initial Certification Requirements for EMRs, EMTs, and Advanced EMTs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Current Education and Training Requirements For Initial Certification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMR</td>
<td>(1) complete 60-hour DPH-approved training that includes written and practical examinations or (2) be currently certified as an EMT, advanced EMT, or paramedic and pass the examination required for an initial EMR training program</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMT</td>
<td>(1) complete 150-hour DPH-approved training that includes written and practical examinations or (2) be currently licensed as a physician, registered or advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant and complete a 30-hour DPH-approved refresher course and pass written and practical examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced EMT</td>
<td>(1) complete 150-hour DPH-approved training that includes written and practical examinations or meets or exceeds the 2009 National EMS Education Standards for the profession and (2) be currently certified as an EMT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMS Instructor</td>
<td>(1) be currently certified in good standing as an EMT; (2) document his or her qualifications, referencing national education standards; (3) submit a letter of endorsement from two certified EMS instructors; and (4) successfully complete written and practical examinations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certification Renewals

The bill requires applicants seeking to renew certification as an EMR, EMT, or advanced EMT to (1) successfully complete the continuing education required by the national organization or approved by DPH or (2) be currently certified in their respective professions by the national organization.

Under current law, EMRs, EMTs, and advanced EMTs seeking certification renewal must complete a DPH-approved refresher course that is 18-hours, 30-hours, and 53-hours, respectively. Applicants currently certified in another state may complete a refresher course in that state if DPH determines it is equal to Connecticut’s.

For EMS instructors, the bill requires applicants for certification renewal to:

1. successfully complete the continuing education and teaching required by DPH;

2. maintain a current Connecticut EMT or advanced EMT certification or paramedic license; and

3. by a date the DPH commissioner prescribes, maintain current EMT, advanced EMT, or paramedic certification by the national organization.

Additionally, the bill removes current law’s requirement that EMRs, EMTs, advanced EMTs, and EMS instructors renew their certifications every three years. It does not specify when certifications must be renewed after January 1, 2020.

Certification By Endorsement

As under current law, the bill requires EMR, EMT, and advanced EMT applicants for certification by endorsement (i.e., those currently certified in another state) to present satisfactory evidence to the DPH commissioner that they are currently certified in good standing in their respective profession by a state with requirements DPH determines are at least as strict as Connecticut’s. The bill alternatively grants
certification to such applicants who are currently certified by the national organization, instead of those currently certified in good standing by Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont, as under current law.

**Continuing Education**

The bill requires EMS personnel to document completion of their continuing education requirements through an online database approved by the DPH commissioner. The database must allow EMS personnel to enter, track, and reconcile continuing education hours and topics.

Under the bill, “EMS personnel” include (1) certified EMRs, EMTs, advanced EMTs, and EMS instructors and (2) licensed paramedics.

**Reinstating an Expired Certification**

The bill requires an EMR, EMT, advanced EMT, or EMS instructor who applies to DPH to reinstate a certification that has expired for two years or less, to complete the department’s recertification requirements. Current law requires this for applicants whose certification expired within one year or less from the application date.

If the applicant’s certification is more than two years expired, he or she must complete the initial certification requirements listed above. Under current law, an applicant whose certification is expired by more than one year but less than three years must pass the examination required for initial certification, in addition to the department’s recertification requirements. Applicants with certifications that are expired for three years or more must complete initial certification requirements.

Under existing law, reinstated certificates are valid for 90 days after their expiration date.

**Certified EMT-Paramedics**

The bill increases, from $150 to $155, the license renewal fee for paramedics who were certified EMT-paramedics on October 1, 1997. (Prior DPH regulations established three levels of EMT certification,
including EMT-paramedic.)

§ 1 — DEFINITION OF EMS ORGANIZATION

Under current law, an “EMS organization” is any public, private, or voluntary organization that offers transportation or treatment services to patients primarily under emergency definitions.

The bill modifies the definition to also (1) include public, private, or voluntary corporations and (2) specify that such organizations and corporations must be certified or licensed by DPH to offer services within the EMS system. Under the bill, these services include treating patients (1) under sudden illness or injury, in addition to emergency conditions, or (2) during transport by an authorized EMS vehicle.

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

HB 6128, favorably reported by the Public Health Committee, allows certified EMS personnel to renew their certification without completing the required refresher training course until he or she re-enters employment as an EMS personnel.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 21  Nay 0  (03/22/2019)