

## **Florida Certified Emergency Medical Services Instructor**

In January 2001, The National Association of EMS Educators (NAEMSE) entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to design an instructor preparation curriculum for EMS educators. The purpose of this curriculum is to help prepare EMS instructors effectively teach adult learners who enroll in their EMS classes. New technological advancements and changes in societal expectations demand adaptation in the EMS education system. Subsequent changes in EMS education include the expectation that the EMS instructor will present problem solving skills, emphasizing high-level cognition both within the classroom and laboratory. Today, the EMS instructor will be called upon to assist the EMS student with critical thinking skills, giving the student the tools they require to deal with ambiguous situations and conflicting issues, both frequently found in Emergency Services.

Last year, the Bureau of EMS approached the President of the Florida Association of EMS Educators (FAEMSE) requesting assistance in establishing guidelines for EMS Instructor qualifications and training. Throughout the country there are many states that have specific requirements for individuals who wish to become an EMS instructor, and currently there are state requirements for teaching in the fire science field. With that knowledge, it was time for Florida to begin the process of creating specific guidelines for individuals who teach our EMT's and Paramedics. FAEMSE President Danny Griffin formed a committee with the focus on creating a plan to establish and implement EMS instructor guidelines. These guidelines will provide an educational plan for Florida allowing the Bureau of EMS to certify Florida EMS Instructors, thereby further improving the quality of education offered to EMS students throughout the state. Many members of FAEMSE have been communicating over the last several months, creating a plan that defines multiple levels of EMS instructors in Florida, with specific educational requirements for each level. The final draft of the plan was posted on the FAEMSE list serve for several months, to allow all members an opportunity to offer input on the proposed plan. After months of discussion in meetings and on list serve, a final draft was produced and will be presented to the Advisory Counsel in the April meeting.

The current proposal outlines four levels of EMS instructor certification. Level A represents the secondary laboratory/clinical instructor; Level B represents the secondary lecture/didactic instructor; Level C instructor represents the primary (lead) instructor, or program coordinator; and Level D instructor represents the program director. With each level of instructor certification there will be a specific course requirement, with specialized topics, all based on the 2002 National Guidelines for Educating EMS Instructors. Level A instructors will be required to complete a 12 hour course. Level B instructors will be required to complete Level A requirements, with an additional 12 hour course. Level C instructors must complete the requirements for both Levels A and B, with an additional 12 hour requirement. Finally, Level D instructors must complete the requirements of Levels A – C, with an additional 6 hours, for a combined total of 42 hours. The courses focus on adult learning methodologies, with strategies to assist instructors in managing issues that may occur in typical EMS classes. The committee has

taken into account the educational qualifications of instructors and created a course exemption list based on the level of education previously obtained by the candidate.

The committee members also focused on designing a program that can be made available to all educational institutions throughout Florida, without causing a significant impact on the institution with regards to transportation and cost. The intention of the program is to be one that will have the ability to adapt and change based on the needs of the community and the profession. As EMS education is evolving around the country, it is now time to focus on EMS education in Florida and the individuals who provide that education. The committee believes that this is the first step for Florida to once again lead the nation in EMS education. If you would like to receive a copy of the EMS instructor proposal contact Rob Holborn at [RobHolborn@cfl.rr.com](mailto:RobHolborn@cfl.rr.com).