



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 3

TO: STUDY COMMITTEE ON VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN SHORTAGES

FROM: Margit Kelley, Senior Staff Attorney, and Andrea Brauer, Staff Attorney

RE: LRB-0246/1, Relating to Intravenous Technician Endorsement for Emergency Medical Technicians

DATE: December 13, 2016

LRB-0246/1 relates to creating an intravenous (IV) technician endorsement for emergency medical technicians (EMTs). This Memo provides information about the scope of practice for the endorsement.

ACTIONS AUTHORIZED BY THE BILL DRAFT

The bill draft directs the Department of Health Services (DHS) to develop an IV technician endorsement for licensed EMTs. DHS has defined the term “endorsement” to mean a validation that a licensed EMT has received the training and education required to be a specialist within a license level. [s. DHS 110.04 (31), Wis. Adm. Code.]

Under the bill draft, an EMT who completes a DHS-approved training program that includes training in administration of IV and intraosseous (IO) infusions of medicated and nonmedicated fluids is generally eligible for the endorsement. DHS may approve different training programs for different EMT licensure levels.

With regard to scope of practice, the bill draft authorizes an EMT holding the endorsement to administer IV and IO infusions of medicated and nonmedicated fluids that the ambulance service provider or medical director has approved, and for which the individual is trained. In addition, the individual may only perform skills, use equipment, and administer medications that DHS has specified in the scope of practice for the particular credential. Likewise, a service’s medical director may only authorize an EMT to administer medications

that are within the scope of practice. [s. 256.15 (6n), Stats.; and ss. DHS 110.12 and 110.52 (3), Wis. Adm. Code.]

Because the IV technician endorsement is not authorized under current law, its scope of practice is not specified. The types of IV and IO infusions DHS could authorize an individual holding the endorsement to perform would ultimately be in DHS's discretion. However, prior regulations offer some potential guidance.

COMPARISON OF RELATED SCOPES OF PRACTICE

As a point of comparison, DHS previously issued a license commonly referred to as the "IV tech." According to representatives from DHS, the IV tech designation has been replaced by the "advanced EMT" (or AEMT) designation, which is intended to have the same scope of practice as the IV tech with two modifications: in addition to the actions that were in the scope of practice for the IV tech, AEMTs may also administer IO infusions and use nitrous oxide in gas form.

The specific terms "IV tech" and "AEMT" do not appear in the statutes or regulations. Instead, DHS regulations use the term "EMT-intermediate technician." According to DHS representatives, IV tech and AEMT have been the names commonly used to refer to the EMT-intermediate technician license.¹ The transition from IV tech to AEMT occurred when DHS substantially revised its EMS regulations effective January 1, 2011.

IV Tech Scope of Practice

Prior to the 2011 revisions to DHS's regulations, an EMT-intermediate technician was known as an IV tech and was authorized to, among other actions, administer the following by IV:

- 5% dextrose in water;
- 50% dextrose solution;
- Lactated ringers solution; and
- Naloxone (narcan).

IV techs were not authorized to administer IO infusions. [s. DHS 111.04 (4) (b), Wis. Adm. Code (2009).]

AEMT Scope of Practice

Since the 2011 revisions to DHS's regulations, an EMT-intermediate technician has been known as an AEMT. AEMT is one of the license levels at which an individual may be registered

¹ The EMT-intermediate technician license has been identified in DHS regulations, but the term is not used in the statutes. [See s. DHS 110.02 (3), Wis. Adm. Code; and s. DHS 111.03 (11m), Wis. Adm. Code (2009).]

with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT). NREMT does not register individuals at the IV tech level.

The AEMT license is similar to the IV tech but has a slightly broader scope of practice. As explained by DHS representatives, the AEMT may, in addition to the IV infusions described above, also administer IO infusions and use nitrous oxide in gas form.

Specifically, the AEMT scope of practice includes authorization to administer IV and IO infusions of the following:

- Dextrose;
- Nitroglycerine; and
- Naloxone (narcan).

The AEMT scope of practice also includes use of nitrous oxide, maintenance of non-medicated IV solutions, administration of an IV pump for non-medicated IVs, insertion of a saline lock, and use of a Supraglottic Airway Laryngopharyngeal Tube (SALT) for intubation.²

Because of this broader scope of practice, IV tech license holders were required to complete additional education to transition to AEMT. During the 2012 renewal period, an IV tech could obtain the new AEMT license by completing a 42-hour refresher course, which included the typical 30 hours of continuing education plus 12 additional hours of training. In the alternative, an IV tech could downgrade to an EMT-basic license. According to DHS, most of the affected individuals completed the additional coursework to obtain an AEMT license.

EMT-Basic Scope of Practice

Under the bill draft, any level of EMT may apply for an IV technician endorsement. In practice, the endorsement would likely be most commonly utilized by a person at the EMT-basic level, as the more advanced levels of licensure may already include IV or IO administration in their scopes of practice.

The EMT-basic license is one step below the AEMT license, and the major differences between the corresponding scopes of practice are as follows: an EMT-basic may not administer IV or IO infusions, insert a saline lock, use a SALT for intubation, or use nitrous oxide. An EMT-basic who obtains the endorsement would be authorized under the bill draft to administer IV and IO infusions, as approved by the ambulance service and in the scope of practice for the endorsement.

² The current AEMT scope of practice is available at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00451.pdf> and <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00451c.pdf>.

Scope of Practice for the Endorsement

The bill draft allows DHS discretion in determining the scope of practice for the IV technician endorsement with regard to the types of IV and IO infusions that endorsement holders may perform. While the actions authorized for the prior IV tech license may provide an indication of how DHS may approach the new endorsement, it is not known what the scope of practice for the IV technician endorsement may be.

MSK:AB:jal