This Month's Topic: Logistics of Sunsetting the Psychomotor Examination

As the National Registry moves away from the psychomotor examination to the updated, all-encompassing cognitive examination, there are several different journeys that a candidate may find themselves in during the transition period.

Director of Operations, Alan Arguello detailed to the Panel the working plan and assumptions of four different candidate pathways which may present with the sunset of the psychomotor examination and simultaneous launch of the updated cognitive examination. The National Registry will continue to monitor these potential journeys so that we can ensure no candidate is left behind.

Many panelists asked to have access to the different candidate pathways and potential considerations. Those are provided as an attachment, Candidate Pathways for Sunsetting Psychomotor Examination.

How It Works

As a refresher, the current plan for sunsetting the psychomotor examination can be highly summarized in the bullets below:

- Introduce new scenarios and TEIs throughout late summer and fall of 2022. Remember, the new scenarios will not solely make up the examination; they are supplemental to existing cognitive examination content.
- It is estimated that the fully integrated and updated cognitive examination format will be ready to launch in late 2023 or early 2024. This is dependent on the data we can collect from piloting over the next year.
- The psychomotor examination will begin sunsetting alongside the launch of the new cognitive examination.

Those three bullet points may make it sound much simpler than it is, and we understand that. There are many nuances and considerations going into not only the timing but the certainty that the community feels ready as well.

Current State

We hosted this conversation with the panel to gather input and concerns that will need to be addressed. We are very thankful that we collected a few:

- Educational Programs may largely stop hosting psychomotor examinations after a set date, due to cost. The Registry is aware of constraints on these examinations and may need to offer flexibility to get our final groups through the process.

- The "extension" of the new cognitive examination should be communicated well in advance and the Registry must understand concerns of how long the new examination will be. Based upon our internal plan, we do know that it will not exceed 4 hours. We are currently estimating it to last ~3:30-4 hours with the potential incorporation of breaks.
- The pass rate for the cognitive examination will be a key factor to watch. Many expressed the importance that the pass rate had to the community. It should be noted our passing standard (cut score) will not be changing when we administer the extended version of the ALS examination therefore, we do not anticipate much change.
- Educational programs, vendors and other members of the EMS community will need reasonable time to understand the content being added, and time to digest the schedule and timeframe in which it will be added. The National Registry intends to launch a few scenarios late summer of this year to ensure there is exposure, familiarity and opportunity for data collection. We also plan to share scenarios, TEIs and more on our website and through email to our educators and vendors so they have material to work with.

It is essential to the National Registry that despite the changes, the examination measures what it is intended to measure to ensure competency and protect the public. Collaboration with the EMS community and Expert Panel is essential to continue these implementations to ensure that all perspectives and feedback are considered. The National Registry is working to ensure early exposure to the process, educators and program directors are prepared, thoroughly work through the logistics of sunsetting the psychomotor examination and that no candidate is left behind.

Student Minimum Competency (SMC) Update

The National Registry has partnered with CoAEMSP, NAEMSE, and NASEMSO to further the SMC framework development for AEMT Educational Programs. The Taskforce is working to address the gap for no accrediting body for AEMT Educational Programs, outside of State Office and Federal Agencies.

The Taskforce is working to produce a voluntary document for organizations to administer and support State Offices in the approval process for AEMT programs. They may also provide recommendations for tracking systems, tools, education, etc. The primary purpose is to provide optional best practice guidelines so that AEMT programs can implement physical skills evaluation in their current processes. These efforts aim to help programs take practitioners from a novice level and bring them to the "clinically ready" level by gaining more experience.

Posed Question

How can we ensure that no candidate gets left behind in this process?

The Consensus

The discourse that the panel provided was informative and insightful. The conversation consisted of perspectives from many parts of the EMS community and the National Registry gained insight about questions, concerns, and counsel as we move forward with sunsetting the psychomotor examination.

The National Registry noted the importance of educational programs in the roll out, maintaining awareness of the new length of the examination in relation to test fatigue, and the current policies for hosting psychomotor examinations.

Collaboration and communication with educators and programs allow us to further consider the candidates throughout this transition, as they are a primary stakeholder. The National Registry is working diligently to ensure that their reality, along with educators, programs, and the EMS community are always a part of the decision making. The EMS community has been a part of this journey and will remain a part of this journey.

The scenarios mentioned in the conversation and again in the recap will be added to the website in a couple of weeks. Make sure to check for more updates, here: https://nremt.org/Document/ALS-Redesign