

ALS Redesign Expert Panel meeting
September 27, 2021 2 p.m. ET



Summing it all up

The month's topic: Peer Professions for EMS

How it Works

- We would like to establish a list of peer professions. To develop this list we need to establish the important criteria on which to compare EMS to other professions. This list would be useful for
 - Benchmarking our policies and processes
 - Benchmarking examination requirements and administration
 - Ensure we are not falling behind in key areas
 - Assess our strengths and weaknesses relative to our peers
 - Look for innovation and creative thinking
 - Create relations to learn from and support each other
 - Create relationships to learn and work with other professions to ensure our procedures and process follow the standard of practice
- The National Registry asked the panel what kind of criteria we might use to establish the list.

Current state and research

- Ash Panchal introduced himself and explained his role as Research and Fellowship Director for the National Registry. Research methodology was applied to figure out next steps in defining peer professions, and Panchal pointed out hazards and pitfalls when identifying those to be included. We began by analyzing federal government data from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) online database to identify similar professions. Data was included from EMT, Paramedic and firefighter occupations. Eleven occupations were identified that satisfy the following criteria.
 - Minimum education requirements
 - Licensure requirements
 - Performance of advanced medical tasks

	Occupations defined by O*NET	Minimum Education Required	Average Yearly Income	NCCA Accreditation
Comparative Occupations	Respiratory Therapists	Associate Degree	\$62,810	Yes
	Dental Hygienists	Associate Degree	\$77,090	No
	Nuclear Medicine Technologists	Associate Degree	\$79,590	Yes
	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	Certificate Program	\$61,900	Yes
	Psychiatric Technicians	Certificate Program	\$35,030	No
	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	Certificate Program	\$36,260	No
	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Certificate Program	\$48,820	No
	Opticians, Dispensing	Certificate Program	\$38,530	No
	Hearing Aid Specialists	Certificate Program	\$52,630	No
	Surgical Assistants	Certificate Program	\$51,840	No
	Massage Therapists	Certificate Program	\$43,620	Yes
Referent	Emergency Medical Technicians	Certificate Program	\$36,650	Yes
	Paramedics	Certificate Program	\$36,650	Yes
	Firefighters	Certificate Program	\$52,500	No

The research team also thoroughly explored the pros/cons of including ‘accreditation’ in the occupation identification in order to clean the data further - after the rigorous criteria were applied, only three occupations remained:

- Respiratory Therapist
- Nuclear Medicine Technologist
- Radiologic Technologist and Technician

Panchal stated that feedback is needed from the panel to be sure we are on the right track. Important distinctions were discussed regarding EMT and Paramedic occupations, as well as the type of accreditation involved (NCCA vs. CAAHEP).

Posed question

What criteria should we use to develop a set of peer professions?

The key points made

- Some important peer professions appear to be missing – many occupations on the referenced chart are ‘technicians’, however measuring clinical judgment implies they are ‘clinicians’.
- Applegate reminded the panel that today’s discussion is focused mainly on identifying the criteria necessary for peer professions, not the occupations themselves, in order to benchmark our practices (appropriate length and content for test, eligibility requirements, etc.) against.

- Discussed difference in accrediting the exam vs. accrediting education programs
- Is the concept of 'public safety' vs. 'health care professional' relevant to the conversation?
 - Examples made by panel members:
 - EMS are true health care professionals who 'do' public safety
 - Example – “EMS doesn't do fire, fire does EMS.”
 - EMS is the only healthcare profession with a 'farm team' (EMT vs. Paramedic)
- One criteria requirement for the peer professions should involve the hand-off in healthcare; paramedics interact with patients in so many different settings, and there is a continuation of care that occurs within a team (peers)
- Another important criterion for peer professions – what are graduates in other fields/healthcare professions doing immediately after they finish? Who else requires the level of autonomy, patient assessment, critical thinking, decision-making as required in EMS?
- Panchal stated that medical tasks were used as one of the first cuts to narrow the peer professions pool.
- Chair Platt asked panelists to submit through chat who they think peer professions are. The following were submitted:
 - Respiratory therapists, physicians, nurses, physician assistants, other public safety positions, social work, public health
- Panchal stated we could focus on peer occupations for exams to limit the scope.

The consensus

Although the panel did not come to a consensus during this meeting of what the definitive criteria should be to establish a professional peer organization, they did explore the complexities and uniqueness of EMS and how some of the roles, responsibilities and education requirements may intersect with other professions.