



STATE OF MAINE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
 MAINE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
 152 STATE HOUSE STATION  
 AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333



JANET T. MILLS  
 GOVERNOR

MICHAEL SAUSCHUCK  
 COMMISSIONER

J. SAM HURLEY  
 DIRECTOR

May 20, 2022

Dear EMS Professional,

On behalf of Maine EMS and the Maine EMS Board, I am pleased to wish you a happy EMS Week. The past few years in public service as EMS clinicians have been exceptionally rough, especially for front-line healthcare workers like you. We are immensely grateful for the time and incredible work that every one of you invests daily to care for the residents and visitors of the State of Maine. As EMS clinicians, you truly embody this year’s theme of “Rising to the Challenge” in everything you do!

Maine EMS, the EMS Board, and its committees hear the frustrations and concerns raised by members of the EMS community. Specifically, we understand that long-standing staffing issues, exacerbated by the pandemic, are adding incredible stress to the system. We understand that each of you is attempting to help bridge the gaps in patient care by working overtime and multiple jobs. Regretfully, there isn’t a silver bullet that Maine EMS or the Board can implement that will alleviate this issue. However, we do want you to know that we are working tirelessly to improve the situation, and we want to highlight some of the efforts that are underway now:

- Maine Legislature explicitly cited EMS as an essential service in the State of Maine;
- Maine EMS is conducting a strategic planning process, which we invite each of you to be a part of (more information can be found on the Maine EMS [website](#));
- Collaborating with this strategic planning, Maine Legislature has convened a Blue Ribbon Commission (LD1988) of 17 members of legislature, Maine EMS, EMS community members, and DHHS to evaluate aspects of EMS including workforce development, training, compensation, retention, cost, reimbursement rates, organization, and local/state support, to address opportunities and gaps in the EMS system statewide;
- Creation of a statewide EMS Explorer Program in collaboration with DHHS;
- Approx. \$7M in funding for free or low-cost EMS education programs throughout the state with all licensed training centers – this includes EMT, AEMT, and paramedic education;
- National recruitment campaign for healthcare workers through Maine DHHS funding, where EMS clinicians are considered a priority hiring block;

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PHONE: (207) 626-3860

TTY: (207) 287-3659

FAX: (207) 287-6251

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- Waiver to allow persons who left the workforce and allowed their license to expire within the past two years to return as an EMT or EMR;
- Investment into community paramedicine as an avenue to create a more sustainable system;
- Creation of the Financial Health Committee with support from the Maine Legislature to look at increasing reimbursement rates;
- Creation of the Maine EMS Stress Response and Resiliency Workgroup to expand mental health support and capacity throughout the state for EMS clinicians; and
- Expansion of mental health stigma reduction efforts in collaboration with the Maine Office of Behavioral Health.

These items are just a few of the initiatives that Maine EMS is supporting in addition to its regular duties.

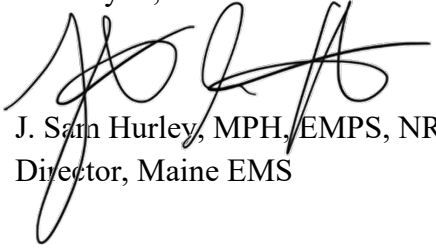
In recognition of your incredible work around the state over the past few years, Maine EMS and the Board wishes to recognize the dedication, skill and efforts you put forth daily despite the immense pressures each of you face, with the challenges of staffing, finances, continuing education, and rising numbers of EMS responses. To help alleviate some of these stressors, and in light of EMS Week 2022, Maine EMS will unilaterally **extend every current EMS license one-time (EMR, EMT, AEMT, & paramedic) by 18 months from their current expiration date**. You will not need to do anything for this to occur. If someone holds a three-year license, that license will now reflect a new expiration date of four-and-a-half years from issuance; if you have a two-year license, it will now be for three-and-a-half years. This change will go into effect no later June 1, 2022 and will be based on all persons who are licensed as of 16:30 today. Information as to how you can obtain an updated license certificate will be provided after ImageTrend completes the update. It must be noted that this will have *no* impact on National Registry of EMT's (NREMT) certifications. If you use NREMT to recertify or wish to maintain it, you should continue to do so in alignment with NREMT policies, procedures, and requirements.

Additionally, today, the Board proposed rules that will reduce the number of continuing education hours moving forward for all licensees and move all licenses to a standard two-year cycle in alignment with the National Continued Competency Program adopted several years ago. These proposed rules will be shared on our website for your public comments in the next few days following legal review.

Once these rules are formally adopted (following the public comment period(s)), Maine EMS will provide specific guidance on renewal timelines, credit hour categories, and other pertinent information. Please note that any hours you have earned during your current licensure cycle will count towards the renewal of your EMS license. We are hopeful that this reprieve of 18 months will allow each of you to take a deep breath and minimize some stressors.

Again, thank you for all of the incredible work you invest in delivering the highest quality care to the residents and visitors of the State of Maine. We wish you all a fantastic EMS Week as you continue to Rise to the Challenge.

Thank you,



J. Sam Hurley, MPH, EMPS, NRP  
Director, Maine EMS



Brent Libby  
Chair, Maine Board of EMS