



## Summary of Discussion Points

### Meeting Topics for Discussion

Funding Considerations for education (infrastructure, faculty, students, etc.)

Present: Chris Azevedo, Don Sheets, Dennis Russell, Jennifer O’Leary, Aiden Koplovsky

Not in Attendance: Joseph Kellner, Rob McGraw

Discussion of education funding mechanisms was discussed from a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) perspective.

#### • Strengths

- Funding for making EMS education available is not reliant upon a single mechanism or source. Sources include, but are not limited to:
- Tuition
  - Student Aid -FAFSA, VA, Free College for Maine, Occasional minority funding for classes
  - Grant funds
    - Workforce funding (expires 2024)
    - Bureau of Labor Healthcare Funding for Maine (AEMT, Paramedic),
- Grants for Programs
  - Innovation Grant (MCCS)
  - Perkins Funding (capital equipment, personnel/staffing) – some grants are expiring with option for institution to pick up upon expiration,
  - Tabitha and Stephen King Foundation
- State monies appropriated for each college
- Congressionally delegated spending

#### • Weaknesses

- Tuition
  - Current tuition is insufficient to cover costs of delivering the course
  - College tuition rates are frozen.
- Grant funding
  - Most grant funding is non-renewable
  - Most grant funding cannot be used to cover program equipment or instructional resources
  - Most current funding is only allocated to cover student tuition.
  - Some grant funding supplants only employer tuition costs and not salary costs
    - Employer costs can vary with Union contracts
- Lack of funding for both program resources and course delivery costs contributes to Training Center inability to accommodate demand for volume of classes
- Low pay for instructors contributes significantly to lack of instructor resources to deliver courses
  - Instructors can make more working as a clinician in the field than as an instructor

- **Opportunities**

- Request for state legislature to advocate to the federal government that EMS be recognized as an essential service, as is being done at the state level in many states
- Employ Grant specialists to look specifically for education grant opportunities
- Formally outline and publicize the “actual” and the “hidden” costs of EMS education programs
  - May allow recognition and address of need for greater support for program resources
    - Address of tuition costs already assists with program accessibility
  - Outline who is able to use which monies and for which purposes
  - Outline the “hidden costs” – cost of program delivery
    - Where is the money that the training centers/education system has been spent?
      - Which costs are being addressed versus costs not being addressed? Compare and contrast numbers and percentages.
    - What is the “break-even” cost? How often is this cost covered?
    - Historic patterns of increased cost (think of this like a service trying to use system status management to contain costs of providing service)
      - Trends in peak program demand
      - Trends in resources used
        - Historic
        - Association with changes in
          - Field clinical practices
          - Scopes of practice
          - Education standards
          - Accreditation requirements
- Various tied to degree completion – scholarship/funding
- Dedicate efforts to seeking out various funding initiatives
  - State funding initiatives – FAME, etc.,
  - Federal initiatives
  - Private/corporate
- Seek out ways to work with employers regarding ways to work with grant funds they receive
- Competency based model for tuition??
  - EMCC is working on similar partnerships at this time
  - “Your Pace Program” – University of Maine. This concept, if adaptable, may reduce course costs if prior learning can be applied, etc.

- **Threats**

- Low pay for full-time and part-time instructor positions contributes significantly to the lack of instructor resources to deliver courses.
  - Lack of a pool of qualified and/or adequately prepared Program Directors has created program resiliency issues if many EMS training programs were to lose key program or instructional personnel
- Attrition of EMS instructors and EMS clinicians is negatively affected by lack of accessibility and availability of EMS education
- The expiration of current Workforce, Bureau of Labor, and other state grant funds will directly impact the ability to continue delivery of EMS licensure education at the current pace.
- Some EMS Training Centers are dependent solely upon their ability to generate their own revenue independently of their parent organization. They do not get funding from their parent/sponsoring organizations.

**Tentative Recommendations (these were suggested, but not approved or voted on by motion)**

- Future Blue-Ribbon Commission/other legislative focus group day dedicated to discussion of EMS Education in Maine
- Explore ways to continue to offer workforce grants/BOL
- Explore ways to obtain data to define the gap between actual cost for program delivery and student cost
- Explore ways to find funding mechanisms to support cost gap between actual program cost and costs covered by student tuition
- Explore alternate funding venues specifically for EMS education
- Explore alternate venues for EMS education
- Explore ways to facilitate use of VA and government assistance for student tuition that would allow use of those funds by students across a wider variety of training centers