

HB 2438 – Eliminating the instructor-coordinator’s certificate requirement associated with the teaching of emergency medical services courses

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Proponent Testimony

Chairman Carpenter and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2438.

The Emergency Medical Services Board is the lead EMS agency in our state responsible for protecting the public through the effective oversight of all things EMS related in Kansas; this includes ambulance services, ambulances, EMS providers, EMS instructors, and EMS educational entities. We have been tirelessly providing guidance, input, and support to those we regulate across the state of Kansas as we remain in close and frequent contact with them to attempt to identify and address challenges as early as possible.

Our Board feels it is extremely important to periodically review all occupational licenses the Legislature has granted us the authority to issue and to determine whether there continues to be a need for that level of oversight and public protection. The bill before you today is a result of that review identifying an occupational license for the instructor-coordinator appears to no longer be necessary due to evolution and growth of the Kansas EMS educational system.

History

When this certificate was created by the Kansas Legislature, there was 1 post-secondary educational institution conducting initial courses of instruction in EMS. This would prove to be an ineffective way to ensure that all areas of the state had access to EMS education and the instructor-coordinator certificate was created. Obtaining this certificate meant that the holder had been trained in how to coordinate courses with the Board and had attended trainings upon the various methods of teaching the adult learner. Just as important is what this certificate did not mean. This certificate did not ensure that the individual had all subject matter knowledge necessary to teach. The verification of this was through ensuring the individual held certification at or above the level of education being taught or was a subject matter expert. These requirements still exist within our regulations when an organization selects and qualifies their instructor(s).

Current Practice

EMS education in Kansas is currently performed by sponsoring organizations and this structure provides statewide coverage for access to EMS education. These organizations are defined in Kansas Statute as any professional association, accredited post-secondary educational institution, permitted ambulance service, fire department, other officially organized public safety agency, hospital, corporation, governmental entity, or EMS regional council approved by the Board to conduct this education. We have just shy of 200 sponsoring organizations in Kansas.

The Board has shifted the responsibility of ensuring quality education from the instructor-coordinator and onto the sponsoring organization. This shift allows flexibility within the sponsoring organization to function as efficient as they desire. An example is for them to select and qualify their own instructors in order to meet the Board’s regulatorily defined intended outcomes.

Currently, there are 147 certified EMS instructor-coordinators in Kansas. These individuals completed a course of instruction, passed a test, and then were mentored through the delivery of an EMS initial course of instruction before gaining their instructor-coordinator certification. Their continuing education is not to teach or coordinate a certain number of courses or required number of hours of training, but rather is to attend a workshop/seminar geared towards adult learning methodologies on an every 2 year basis.

Board's Review

When looking at requiring an occupational license, the Board reviewed the question of what happens if we took the certificate away and what would it stop the holder from doing. We found that it could not stop the individual from being selected as an instructor and teaching due to the person potentially still holding a credential that would qualify them as a subject matter expert. This led the Board to reviewing the other component of the occupational license and that was the coordination of the course with the Board. This is primarily paperwork and following existing structure – creating schedules, course policies, selection of textbooks, development of examinations, etc. The Board felt that this portion could be done through workshop training and the development of tools and resources for these individuals responsible for coordinating and did not rise to a level of requiring an occupational license.

The Board has discussed the elimination of this occupational license in numerous public meetings. Through those meetings and discussion, it was determined that having the responsibility of quality instruction with the sponsoring organization is appropriate. Giving these organizations the flexibility and freedom to choose who they believe is most qualified to conduct the EMS education they desire to offer is appropriate and suffices for the public protection that was afforded by the instructor-coordinator occupational license.

Summary

Occupational licensing should be reserved to limit the practice of an art to only those individuals in the state that hold that license and should further be a necessary undertaking to protect the public's welfare and well-being. The education these individuals received is necessary and beneficial for them to be successful at their job, but our Board believes that requiring an occupational license for instructor-coordinator is unnecessary and burdensome to an individual that may otherwise be qualified to instruct as a subject matter expert or may hold a degree to educate at a post-secondary level.

We believe the growth of EMS education in Kansas has built the mechanisms to continue to ensure quality and safe instruction is occurring in every location of our state without the burden of requiring an individual to gain or maintain an occupational license. We do believe that this may grant better access to EMS education across the state by eliminating this burden as well.

HB2438 appropriately and effectively eliminates the occupational licensing for the instructor-coordinator and the Emergency Medical Services Board asks for your support and the bill's successful passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at the appropriate time.