

PARAMEDIC LICENSURE EXAMINATION REQUIREMENT

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House Bill 6086 as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. Jeff Yaroeh
Committee: Workforce, Trades, and Talent
Complete to 6-9-22

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 6086 would amend Part 209 of the Public Health Code to change provisions relating to the examination an individual seeking to enter certain regulated professions must successfully complete. The bill would add new requirements relating specifically to the examination needed to become a paramedic and require the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to develop or prescribe a written and practical examination for paramedics. The bill also would require unaccredited sponsors of education programs for paramedics to disclose their unaccredited status before offering an individual a program.

Examinations

Currently, as used in Part 209, the term *examination* means a written and practical evaluation approved or developed by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians or other organization with equivalent national recognition and expertise in emergency medical services personnel testing and approved by DHHS. This definition applies to license examinations for medical first responders, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technician specialists, paramedics, and emergency medical services instructor-coordinators.

The bill would remove “written and practical” from the above definition of *examination*. This revised definition would apply to an examination for licensure as a medical first responder, emergency medical technician, or emergency medical technician specialist. It would not apply to examinations for emergency medical services instructor-coordinators.

Under the bill, a paramedic would have to pass either of the following to become licensed in Michigan:

- The written examination proctored by DHHS or a designee of DHHS and a practical examination proctored by DHHS or a designee of DHHS. An individual taking the examination described in this provision would have to pay the fee for it directly to the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians or another organization approved by DHHS. (The revised definition of *examination* described above would apply to the examination described in this provision.)
- A written and practical examination developed or prescribed by DHHS other than the examination described above. (DHHS would have two years to develop or prescribe the examination and could charge a fee for it that does not exceed the fee for an applicant taking the examination described above.)

Education program sponsors

The bill would add a new provision requiring an *education program sponsor* that conducts education programs for paramedics and is not accredited to notify an individual seeking licensure as a paramedic that the sponsor is not accredited before offering an education program

to that individual. (Accreditation means being approved by the joint review committee on educational programs for the EMT-paramedic or other organization approved by DHHS as having equivalent expertise and competency. The entity must submit an application to DHHS that includes verification of the accreditation and maintain that accreditation.)

Education program sponsor means a person, other than an individual, that meets the standards of DHHS to conduct training at the following levels:

- Medical first responder.
- Emergency medical technician.
- Emergency medical technician specialist.
- Paramedic.
- Emergency medical services instructor-coordinator.

MCL 333.20904 et seq.

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

According to the bill's sponsor, House Bill 6086 is intended to remove a hurdle that makes it more difficult for smaller paramedic training programs to start. Supporters of the bill argue that making it easier for more programs to operate and train prospective paramedics, especially in rural areas, will help alleviate a growing shortage of paramedics available to staff ambulances. These shortages negatively impact initial response times and care, as individuals must wait longer for an ambulance staffed with paramedics to arrive at the location where emergency care is needed.

Adding programs will allow more individuals to receive the training necessary to sit for the paramedic examination required for licensure, as the state would be required to develop its own examination in addition to the version currently required. Proponents note that, prior to 2000, the state used its own examination and that there are individuals working as paramedics now who were licensed under that pathway.

Opponents of the bill argue that setting up an alternate pathway that does not require the national accreditation as currently prescribed under law will diminish the readiness of the paramedics coming through those programs, resulting in poorer patient care and potentially wasting the money of program participants if they are unable to be adequately prepared to pass the examination. While those who oppose the bills admit that there is a shortage of paramedics, they say the state authorizing its own examination will mean a less rigorous standard for those paramedics entering the field, leading to different patient care issues. Additionally, opponents argue that by duplicating the existing examination, the state would be needlessly spending state dollars.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 6086 would have fiscal implications for DHHS for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) licensing and enforcement program. DHHS would be obligated to develop or prescribe a new written and practical examination option for paramedics, and may charge and collect a fee. Currently paramedic examination fees are paid directly to a non-state examination entity. DHHS indicates an estimated cost of \$2.0 million to establish an examination program, with

annual costs of \$1.6 million per year including 15.0 FTEs to implement, support, and maintain the examination program. It is likely that a fee would be charged to take the examination, producing revenue which would help to offset the costs of the examination program.

Licensing and examination fees would be used only to support the cost of the EMS licensing and examination program. Current year funding supporting EMS licensing programs is about \$2.3 million Gross, including \$1.5 million GF/GP and \$805,000 from licensing fees.

POSITIONS:

The following entities indicated support for the bill:

- Lake Michigan College (5-26-22)
- Michigan Professional Fire Fighters Union (5-19-22)

The following entities indicated opposition to the bill (5-19-22):

- Michigan College of Emergency Physicians
- Michigan Health and Hospital Association

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.