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Subject: Credentialing- What You Need to Know

Idaho EMS,

Earlier this year the EMS Physician Commission (EMSPC) asked us to explore the personnel credentialing practices used by EMS agencies during our annual site visit. Our Field Coordinators discovered during their site visits that credentialing is a sometimes misunderstood topic. In that light, we would like to offer a brief description of credentialing.

In order for someone to legally provide EMS in Idaho, the person must:

- 1) Hold a current EMS license issued by the State of Idaho;
- 2) Be affiliated with and authorized to act by an Idaho licensed EMS agency; and
- 3) Be **Credentialed** and supervised by an Idaho licensed physician medical director.

The first two elements (licensing and affiliation) are well understood, but credentialing deserves further exploration. Credentialing is the EMS agency process where the individual is permitted (credentialed) by the medical director. Credentialing includes verifying licensure, affiliation, qualifications, proficiencies and completion of the agency orientation. Credentialing is not “all or nothing” as a medical director can limit or remove an individual provider’s permission (credential) to practice specific skills or interventions under the medical director’s supervision.

Given the diversity that exists in EMS agencies, the credentialing processes tend to vary between agencies. The credentialing process used for each agency should be described in the agency medical supervision plan (MSP). Typically, the agency administrator and medical director will collaborate to establish an agency’s credentialing process. One process that is commonly used includes the agency administrator facilitating the credentialing process with the medical director maintaining oversight and ultimately, authorizing the provider to practice.

The following are some of the questions about credentialing that we have encountered:

1) Q. Isn't the letter I get from the state with my renewed license considered credentialing?

No. The agency and/or medical director should verify the license issued by the Bureau as a part of the credentialing process but it does not take the place of reviewing the qualifications and proficiencies of a provider.

2) Q. How do I know if I've been credentialed by my medical director?

A. Ask your agency administrator or medical director to learn more about your agency's credentialing process. Some agencies use a formal process to credential their providers; others use a less formal approach so it may be taking place behind the scenes.

3) Q. How often should I be credentialed by my medical director?

A. The EMSPC recommends that each provider be credentialed annually, but there is no frequency specified in rule.

4) Q. In order to credential me, does my medical director have to watch me do each individual skill in my scope of practice?

A. Your agency and medical director will determine the specific process they will use to verify the skill competencies of their affiliated EMS personnel. The process used to verify skill competencies should be described in your agency's MSP.

5) Q. When my agency gets a new medical director, do I need to be re-credentialed?

A. Yes, credentialing is specific to each individual medical director.

6) Q. Who can we contact to answer questions or find resources regarding credentialing?

A. The EMSPC's Standards Manual and Medical Supervision Development Guide provide further detail about credentialing and provide sample forms. These can be found on their website at www.emspc.dhw.idaho.gov If you have questions please call us at (208)-334-4000.



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