



PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY
HEALTH SERVICES COUNCIL
Your Voice In EMS

RECOMMENDATION FOR CONSIDERATION

Board Meeting Date: September 16, 2020

Subject: Discontinuation of Spinal Immobilization Psychomotor Testing

VTR#: 0920-02

Committee/Task Force: EMS Education

☐ Recommended Goal

☒ Recommended Policy Change

☐ Other:

Recommendation:

The Department of Health should discontinue spinal immobilization testing as part of the EMT psychomotor examination.

Rationale [Background]:

Evidence-based patient care has shifted from “spinal immobilization” to “spinal motion restriction.” The evidence revealed that application of a long spine board (LSB) did not achieve immobilization of the spinal column and, in some instances, may be detrimental to the patient’s wellbeing.

In accordance with the current science, the term spinal immobilization has been replaced with, “Restrict Spinal Motion” in the PA EMS provider scope of practice published on January 18, 2020. The current PA Statewide Treatment Protocols establish spinal motion restriction as the expected standard of care. The scope of practice lists adjunctive devices for spinal motion restriction as a scoop-litter, vacuum mattress, et al, for providers above the level of EMR.

Although an LSB (Qty 1) is still required device for extrication/lifting and moving, the “short spine board” device is no longer required (Pa.B. February 15, 2020).

Information received by the task force reveals the National Registry of EMTs intends to remove spinal immobilization testing from its list of requirements for attestation by a state’s lead EMS agency. Implementation of this recommendation may need to be delayed until the NREMT removes this requirement.

Medical Review [Concerns]:

None – this recommendation is consistent with the current PA provider scope of practice and standard of care reflected in the statewide treatment protocols.

Fiscal Concerns:

None.

Educational Concerns:

BLS educational institutes will continue to provide theory and practicum instruction for use of the long spine board as an extrication/lifting and moving device. The educational institute will continue to verify the student’s competency in the use of a LSB based on the indications stated above.

Plan of Implementation:

The implementation of this recommendation may be delayed until such a time when the NREMT removes this item from the attestation statement's list of requirements. After this requirement has been removed, the Department of Health should notify all regional EMS councils and EMS educational institutions that spinal immobilization psychomotor testing is no longer required for EMT certification.

The PEHSC Committee/Task Force offers consultation to the Department in regard to the content of this Vote to Recommend (VTR) and its attached documents. The PEHSC Committee/Task Force specifically offers staff or member support to participate in Department deliberations regarding this recommendation in an effort to convey committee/task force discussions.

Board Meeting Comments/Concerns:

None.



Signed: _____ Date 9/17/20
J. David Jones, President

For PEHSC Use Only – PA Department of Health Response

Accept: _____ Table: _____ Modify: _____ Reject: _____

Comments:

Date of Department Response: _____