



NAEMT Position Statement Medical Direction of Emergency Medical Services

Statement: NAEMT believes that medical direction is an essential component of an effective EMS system in order to ensure that patient care is administered with appropriate clinical oversight using medically accepted standards. All EMS systems, regardless of their delivery model, should operate with medical direction and oversight from an EMS physician.

Background: NAEMT has long recognized the need for and importance of medical direction that provides strong clinical oversight in the establishment and maintenance of medically accepted standards for prehospital patient care. Since the passage of the first laws and regulations in the United States governing the provision of emergency medical services, physician medical direction has been and remains a fundamental component of effective EMS systems. Medical directors provide the following essential services:

- oversight of the clinical practice of the EMS system;
- development of sound, evidenced based clinical practice guidelines;
- assuring the safe implementation of new medical technology;
- provision of feedback and input on patient care by EMS practitioners;
- development and oversight of an objective performance improvement process;
- maintenance of accountability and standards for the EMS profession;
- serving as a liaison between the EMS system and the medical community;
- identification of initial and continuing education opportunities for EMS practitioners;
- identification of research opportunities for EMS practitioners.

EMS medical directors are an invaluable asset to effective EMS systems and have contributed significantly to the elevation of the practice of prehospital medicine. Within a well functioning

EMS system, the physician medical director and the EMS practitioners maintain a strong, cohesive relationship based on mutual respect and understanding of the critical role that each plays in the successful delivery of the highest quality prehospital patient care.

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