

# F.Y.I.

By Kevin Veal

**Q: I've heard that EMS Education Programs in Texas are still using the EMT Intermediate curriculum from 1985, but someone told me that there was a new one in 1999 that we are using. Which is correct?**

A: The short answer is neither. Texas never adopted the 1999 Intermediate curriculum, nor are we still using the 1985 Intermediate curriculum (although this is frequently misstated). Part of the confusion comes from the fact that there are references to the curriculum in several different areas including: education standards, National Registry (NR) testing and certification.

EMS Education Programs are actually required to teach Intermediate students a subset of the 1998 US Department of Transportation (DOT) paramedic curriculum. This was adopted in 2001 as an alternative to the 1999 Intermediate curriculum. The 1999 Intermediate curriculum did not offer an easy, direct pathway for individuals to advance from Intermediate to Paramedic certification. During the rulemaking process, it became clear that this pathway was very important to Texas EMS stakeholders and the adopted portions of the paramedic curriculum allowed for an easy transition between the two certifications while still increasing the standards to meet current practice.

The actual language from §157.32 *Emergency Medical Services Education Program and Course Approval* of the Texas EMS rules states that the minimum EMT-I curriculum shall include: all content required by the portions of the current national paramedic education standards and competencies as defined by DOT which address the following areas: (i) roles and responsibilities of the paramedic; (ii) well-being of the paramedic; (iii) illness and injury prevention; (iv) medical/legal issues; (v) ethics; (vi) general principles of pathophysiology; (vii) pharmacology; (viii) venous access and medication administration; (ix) therapeutic communications; (x) life span development; (xi) patient assessment; (xii) airway management and ventilation, including endotracheal intubation; and (xiii) trauma.

As anyone who has recently taken the Intermediate test will tell you, the National Registry requires each candidate to choose between an Intermediate 85 and Intermediate 99 exam. Although the National Registry creates their exams to test current practices and techniques, the outline or "blueprint" for the exams comes from the DOT curriculum knowledge objectives. These objectives determine the broad categories for the information that is tested. Since the exam from the 1999 blueprint has questions about information not required in Texas, the 1985 blueprint is the only one that fits within the adopted curriculum.

That said, some programs in Texas have chosen to offer courses based upon the Intermediate 1999 curriculum. As long as the adopted requirements are met, this is perfectly acceptable since the rule only sets the minimum standards for courses. The courses must still be approved by DSHS and students should be made aware that the course will contain additional hours and information. Coordinators must also be aware that the NR computer-based test requires DSHS to approve programs that will be testing students. As a result, coordinators should contact DSHS prior to offering an EMT-I 1999 course to set up the appropriate permissions.

Finally, regardless of which curriculum, program or exam that a student completes, there is only one EMT-Intermediate certification in Texas. Although someone who has completed an expanded curriculum may desire to fully utilize all the skills and knowledge that they have learned, and in many cases will have the opportunity to do so, individual scope of practice is determined by the service's protocols and physician medical director authorization.

For additional information, please visit these websites:

EMS Rules: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/TexAdminCode.shtm>

National Registry: [www.nremt.org](http://www.nremt.org)

USDOT NHSTA: [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)