



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Dani O'Halloran introducing

LD 1387, a Resolve, to Increase the Emergency Medical Workforce by Allowing Military Medical Personnel to Become Eligible for Licensure as Emergency Medical Services Persons

Before Joint Standing Committee on Health Care, Insurance and Financial Services

Sen. Bailey, Rep. Mathieson and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Care, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Dani O'Halloran, and I represent House District 20, which is most of the industrious city of Brewer. Today, I am proud to present **LD 1387, a Resolve, to Increase the Emergency Medical Workforce by Allowing Military Medical Personnel to Become Eligible for Licensure as Emergency Medical Services Persons**.

I introduced this measure in response to the declining number of emergency service providers in our state. I know everyone on this Committee is dedicated to expanding both the availability and accessibility of our service providers and this resolution will strive to do just that. Its intent is to explore the possibility of allowing our veteran military members, who have already been extensively trained in emergency healthcare procedures, to bypass the required course that medical professionals are mandated to complete to work in emergency medical services (EMS). To become certified as an EMS professional, one must complete a full year of coursework. While this is generally beneficial, it seems repetitive to require our veterans to take that same course in practices and procedures that they are already familiar with. This redundancy in training has been shown to deter these qualified and capable individuals from committing to EMS careers due to the unnecessary expenditure of time and financial resources. If this year-long training requirement continues for our veterans, it will continue to only prolong the vacancies of these vital positions in our communities.

As a result, many end up pursuing different careers, exacerbating the existing shortage of medics in Maine. This bill seeks to close that gap and create opportunities for veterans transitioning from military service to civilian EMS roles. This workforce expansion would greatly benefit our communities across the state, like my home city of Brewer, which has been tasked with starting our own municipal ambulatory service. This bill aims to ensure that there is no workforce gap by enabling competent, highly skilled individuals—who have diligently trained in the armed forces—to utilize their abilities here at home. Transforming this measure into a resolution is a thoughtful and measured response to expanding our workforce.

I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.

The American Legion Department of Maine would like to provide suggested text to be included in the establishment of the procedures to accept medical services licensure of all military service.

Department of Public Safety, Maine Emergency Medical Services to establish procedures to allow an individual who served on active duty in the medical corps of any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States to become eligible for licensure as an emergency medical services person and directs the department to submit a report on the establishment of those procedures.

I. Foundational Principles:

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** The core principle should be to acknowledge the valuable training and experience gained in the military medical corps. Avoid requiring redundant training.
- **Streamlined Process:** The procedures should be clear, efficient, and easy for veterans to navigate.
- **Public Safety:** While recognizing military experience, the procedures must ensure that licensed EMS personnel meet the required competency standards for safe patient care.
- **Collaboration:** Effective implementation requires collaboration between the state EMS regulatory agency, veterans' affairs organizations, and potentially educational institutions.

II. Key Steps in Establishing the Procedures:

1. Gap Analysis and Equivalency Determination:

- **Comprehensive Review of Military Medical Training:** The state EMS regulatory agency should conduct a thorough review of the curriculum and scope of practice for various medical roles within each branch of the Armed Forces (e.g., Combat Medics, Corpsmen, Medical Technicians, Nurses, Physicians).
- **Comparison to State EMS Curriculum:** Compare the military training standards and learning objectives to the state's EMS curriculum for each licensure level (e.g., EMT, AEMT, Paramedic). Identify areas of overlap and potential gaps.
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- **Establish Equivalency Criteria:** Based on the gap analysis, define specific military medical roles and training that can be considered equivalent to certain portions or the entirety of the state's EMS curriculum. This might involve:
 - Direct equivalency for specific military qualifications to certain EMS levels.
 - Partial credit or advanced standing in EMS training programs.
 - Specific military training modules that can satisfy certain state EMS requirements.

2. Documentation and Verification Process:

- **Clear Application Pathway:** Create a specific application process for veterans with military medical experience.
- **Required Documentation:** Define the necessary documentation veterans must provide, such as:
 - Official military transcripts (Joint Service Transcript - JST).
 - Certificates of completion for relevant medical training.
 - Records of clinical experience and scope of practice while on active duty.
 - Discharge paperwork (DD-214).
- **Verification Mechanism:** Establish a reliable process to verify the authenticity of military documentation. This might involve direct communication with military record repositories.

3. Assessment of Competency:

- **Practical Skills Evaluation:** Depending on the identified gaps and the level of licensure sought, implement practical skills evaluations that assess the veteran's ability to perform essential EMS skills. This could be through:
 - Focused skills testing based on identified curriculum gaps.
 - Scenario-based evaluations.

- **Written Examination:** Require veterans to pass the state's standard EMS written examination for the desired licensure level, unless their military training and experience are deemed fully equivalent.
- **Consideration for National Registry:** Recognize the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT) certification, as many military medical personnel pursue this credential. Establish a clear pathway for NREMT-certified veterans to obtain state licensure.

4. Bridging or Refresher Training:

- **Targeted Training Modules:** Develop short, focused training modules to address any identified gaps between military medical training and state EMS requirements. These could cover state-specific protocols, legal aspects of EMS, or skills not extensively covered in their military training.
- **Refresher Courses:** Offer refresher courses specifically designed for veterans to update their knowledge and skills in the civilian EMS context.

5. Licensure and Credentialing:

- **Expedited Review:** Implement a process for expedited review of applications from qualified veterans.
- **Clear Communication:** Maintain clear and proactive communication with applicants throughout the process.
- **Issuance of State EMS License:** Upon successful completion of all requirements, issue the appropriate state EMS license.

6. Ongoing Review and Improvement:

- **Regular Evaluation:** Periodically review the effectiveness of the established procedures.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Solicit feedback from veterans who have gone through the process and from EMS agencies that hire them.
- **Adaptability:** Be prepared to adapt the procedures based on experience and changes in military medical training or state EMS requirements.

III. Specific Recommendations:

- **Designate a Point of Contact:** Assign a specific individual within the state EMS regulatory agency to serve as the primary point of contact for veterans seeking EMS

licensure. This person should be knowledgeable about military medical training and the established procedures.

- **Develop Clear Guidance Documents:** Create easily accessible guides and checklists outlining the application process, required documentation, and assessment methods for veterans.
- **Outreach to Military and Veteran Organizations:** Proactively engage with military bases, transition assistance programs, and veteran support organizations to inform service members about the licensure pathways.
- **Consider Provisional Licensure:** Explore the possibility of issuing provisional licenses to qualified veterans, allowing them to work under supervision while completing any remaining requirements.
- **Promote Reciprocity:** Work towards interstate reciprocity agreements that recognize EMS licenses obtained by veterans based on their military medical experience in other states.

IV. Legal and Regulatory Considerations:

- **State EMS Statutes and Regulations:** Ensure all procedures comply with existing state laws and regulations governing EMS licensure.
- **National Standards:** Consider alignment with national EMS standards and guidelines.
- **Liability and Scope of Practice:** Clearly define the scope of practice for each level of EMS licensure and ensure veterans understand their responsibilities and limitations under state law.

By implementing these recommendations, Maine can create a fair, efficient, and safe pathway for qualified veterans with medical corps experience to contribute their valuable skills to the civilian emergency medical services system. This not only benefits veterans by providing career opportunities but also strengthens the EMS workforce with experienced and dedicated individuals.