



News Release

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January 23, 2009
NR09011

First NMCC paramedic students to take national exam achieve 100 percent pass rate; all now working for EMS organization

Aroostook County - Students and faculty in the emergency medical services program at Northern Maine Community College are celebrating after learning all of the first group of paramedic students from the College to take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam have passed the test.

NMCC Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program coordinator and lead instructor Daryl Boucher got word last week that all seven students who completed the paramedic program at the College in recent months have successfully earned certification through NREMT. Moreover, Boucher, who is in contact with the students, is pleased to report that all have gained employment with EMS organizations – six of the seven with providers that serve Aroostook County.

“The NREMT exams are extremely rigorous. This really speaks to the quality of our program, our faculty, and of the students who are enrolled in EMS coursework here at NMCC,” said Boucher. “The national pass rate for this exam is 68 percent, and our students achieved a 100 percent pass rate on the difficult computer-based written exam. Our faculty have worked hard to learn about the NREMT testing process and to assure that our students are prepared to practice high quality care anywhere in the Country.”

The seven students, all of whom are from northern Maine, were the first group of NMCC students to ever complete testing through the national registry. Prior to this cohort, students completed a state examination.

Students completing the program and passing the national test were Paul Breton of Island Falls, who is now working as a paramedic for the Town of Island Falls; Erik Dickinson of Stockholm, who is employed by the Madawaska Ambulance Department; Amy Gagnon of Van Buren, who serves with the Van Buren Ambulance Department; Peggy Jalbert of Fort Fairfield, who is employed by Crown Ambulance in central Aroostook; Eric Mailman of Houlton, who is now working for Downeast EMS which serves Danforth in southern Aroostook; and Kurt Soucy of Eagle Lake, who is employed by both the Madawaska Ambulance Department and Fort Kent-based Ambulance Services, Inc.

In addition, NMCC paramedic graduate Christopher Desjardins of Madawaska also passed the national exam. Desjardins is now working for Mount Pleasant Fire and EMS in South Carolina.

The NREMT examinations measure the important aspects of pre-hospital care practice. These exams are particularly valuable because they measure competence in current practice trends from a national perspective. The exams have been validated as an effective measure for assuring quality entry level practice. Individual examination items are developed by members of the EMS community. Because it is a national certification examination, graduates are able to work in many jurisdictions nationwide.

The single most important goal of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians is to offer assurance that EMS personnel providing treatment to patients—at their highest moment of need—are competent. The NREMT accomplishes this goal with a staff that includes highly qualified EMS experts who understand what is involved in treating patients in the out-of-hospital setting. They are responsible for implementing a process that involves meeting specific requirements. This is necessary due to the sensitive nature of the EMS profession and the level of trust placed on EMS personnel.

The NREMT was founded in 1970 as a result of the recommendations made by the Committee on Highway Traffic Safety. This committee proposed a national certification agency to establish uniform standards for training and examination of personnel active in the delivery of emergency ambulance service, and in 2008 the Maine EMS Board voted to require all programs transition to National Registry Testing for paramedics.

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