Outcomes Threshold Report Summary 2014
By Patricia L. Tritt, RN, MA

The CoAEMSP Quality Improvement Committee recently reviewed the analysis of the outcomes data from the 2014 CAAAHEP/CoAEMSP Annual Reports. As a review, the following minimum thresholds are identified:

Outcome	Threshold
Written National or State Credentialing Examinations	70%
Programmatic Retention	70%
Job (Positive) Placement	70%

In the past, the outcomes data were reviewed, but actions were not required by programs when a threshold was not met. However, beginning with the 2012 annual reports, covering the 2009 - 2011 graduate reporting period, programs that did not meet the threshold for Written National or State Credentialing Examinations were required to submit a detailed analysis and action plan in a Standardized Progress Report (SPR) format. Outcomes data are analyzed based on a three-year rolling average. Since Annual Reports are due in December each year and some programs do not have complete data for that previous 12 months, the 3-year "review window" always omits the calendar year of the report submission.

The 2013 annual reports (review window of the 2010 - 2012 graduates) added an analysis of Programmatic Retention, and programs were required to submit a detailed analysis and action plan if this outcome was below 70%. The 2014 annual reports (review window of the 2011 - 2013 graduates) added the third threshold of Job or Positive Placement.

The process of review, analysis, and standardized reporting continues to evolve. Now, instead of waiting for a letter from the CoAEMSP requesting the appropriate SPR(s), those tools (a separate one for each outcome) are available on the CoAEMSP website in a SurveyMonkey® format and programs are instructed to complete and submit at the time of submission of the Annual Report. Those SPR(s) are then reviewed by the CoAEMSP Quality Improvement Committee and programs are provided feedback: the report is accepted as satisfactory analysis and action plan, or the program is asked to resubmit providing additional information as to how that program intends to improve that outcome. Further streamlining is being evaluated to incorporate the responses into future Annual Reports.

Results for the 2014 Annual Reports are as follows:

A total of 91 programs were required to submit one or more SPRs for falling below the three-year average on the threshold of one or more outcomes (21% of all reporting programs). Seventy-nine programs were required to submit an SPR for 1 outcome, 11 for two outcomes, and 1 for three outcomes.

Written National or State Credentialing Examinations Outcome:

- 430 programs submitted Annual Reports
- 10 fell below the 70% passing threshold (2% of reporting programs)

- 100% of the Standardized Progress Reports were accepted by the Quality Improvement Committee as delineating an adequate analysis of the reasons for poor passing scores and providing a satisfactory action plan
- 0 programs received letters identifying the need for further analysis and implementation of corrective actions

Programmatic Retention Outcome:

- 430 programs submitted Annual Reports
- 72 fell below the 70% retention threshold (17% of reporting programs)
- 70 of the Standardized Progress Reports were accepted by the Quality Improvement Committee as delineating an adequate analysis of the reasons for poor retention scores and providing a satisfactory action plan
- 2 programs received letters identifying the need for further analysis and implementation of corrective actions

Job (Positive) Placement Outcome:

- 430 programs submitted Annual Reports
- 22 fell below the 70% placement threshold (5% of reporting programs)
- 20 of the Standardized Progress Reports were accepted by the Quality Improvement Committee as delineating an adequate analysis of the reasons for poor job placement and providing a satisfactory action plan
- 2 programs received letters identifying the need for further analysis and implementation of corrective actions

Some themes or lessons from the review of the SPRs included:

- Program Directors need a better understanding of how to complete the Annual Report. The CoAEMSP website includes an FAQ sheet and webinar on preparing the Annual Report: www.coaemsp.org/webinars.htm.
- Programs can choose the date/method of when they take the official count of students in the Paramedic program: for example , end of add-drop, IPEDS reported number, assignment of the major code by the Registrar, or other reasonable method. The methodology chosen by the program must be consistent from year to year.
- Programs in colleges should be aware of the placement resources/center within their institution and access those services.
- Retention appears to be the current most challenging outcome and some suggestions can be found in the CoAEMSP October 2014 eNewsletter on the page: http://coaemsp.org/publications.htm.
- Small student cohorts continue to be a challenge for some programs for the written exam and retention thresholds.

Establishing thresholds in key areas is part of the focus on an outcomes oriented approach in education. And outcomes are very important to our students. CoAEMSP works with programs to identify barriers to achieving thresholds and ways to address improving certifying examination results, retention, and positive placement as needed. Paramedic programs are unique and face various challenges; however, the collective goal is to provide a sound educational experience for the student and to graduate competent entry level providers.

As the process for review and analysis of outcomes continues, the dialogue between the program and the CoAEMSP will escalate if the rolling three year averages continue to be below thresholds and a range of actions may occur. Programs will be evaluated on a variety of factors including the actual percentage in the category, trends (improving, declining, static), and other significant factors. The third consecutive year of not meeting a threshold may result in a citation originated by the CoAEMSP QI Committee, which will then follow the process of

CoAEMSP/CAAHEP action, as appropriate. Potential actions could include: required Progress Report or a site visit. At some point of not a meeting threshold(s), a negative accreditation action, such as probationary may result.

There is also good news for programs. Most agree that feedback from Graduate and Employer Surveys provides valuable information but we all know how hard it can be to even get the threshold 50% return rate. CoAEMSP is strongly committed to continuing the Graduate and Employer survey process, but the Board has decided to drop the required 50% threshold for return rate. Instead, programs will **be accountable for the number/percent of surveys sent, which must be 100%.** Programs will still report the number/percent received and report on the analysis of results. So yes, programs must continue to send surveys and make a good faith effort to solicit returns, and analyze the results.

As mentioned previously, accurate completion of the Annual Report continues to be a challenge. This reporting year only 55% of the ARs were submitted correctly the first time. However, there is a lot of assistance available. Visit the CoAEMSP Annual Report webpage at http://coaemsp.org/Annual_Reports.htm. Review the Annual Report information:

- FAQ sheet
- Slides
- Webinar

You can also contact Lynn Caruthers at lynn@coaemsp.org or 214-703-8445, x115.

CAAHEP has also mandated that ALL CoA's must require programs to report on at least one Outcome Threshold that will be viewable by prospective students as well as the public. The CoAEMSP Board of Directors has voted to require that ALL CAAHEP accredited programs will make the following results available by December 31, 2015:

Written National or State Credentialing Examinations Outcome,
Programmatic Retention Outcome,
& Job (Positive) Placement Outcome

The CoAEMSP will require that CAAHEP accredited programs provide evidence of a web link to these results with submission of the 2015 Annual Report due by December 31, 2015. Please look for additional details to follow in the near future.

Congratulations to the many programs who met all the outcomes thresholds for this reporting year! Let us know what your program is doing well – what are your best practices – and we will share that information with other programs.

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