
Pushing the BLS Envelope



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Objectives

- To understand the evolution of EMS
- To explore the changes in BLS scope of practice
- To examine what treatments could be included in BLS scope of practice now and in the future
- To foster discussion both here today and at your home EMS agencies

Presentation Overview

- Brief history of the evolution of EMS
- Scope of practice for various skill levels
- Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS
- Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS
- Exploring the future of BLS scope of practice
- Conclusion / Questions

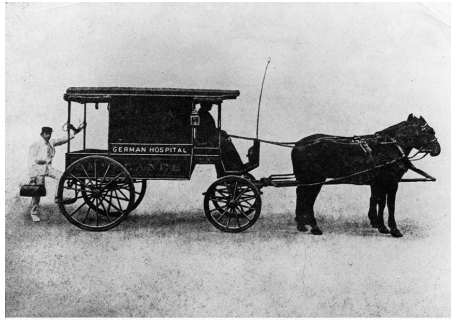
Definitions

- Trained*: has been educated to perform the skill
- Certified*: has demonstrated competence
- Licensed*: has legal authority issued by the state
- Credentialed*: has medical oversight
- Scope of Practice*: a description of what a licensed individual legally can, and cannot, do
- Standard of Care†: the level at which the average, prudent provider in a given community would practice.

* National EMS Scope of Practice Draft

† www.medterms.com

Brief History of EMS



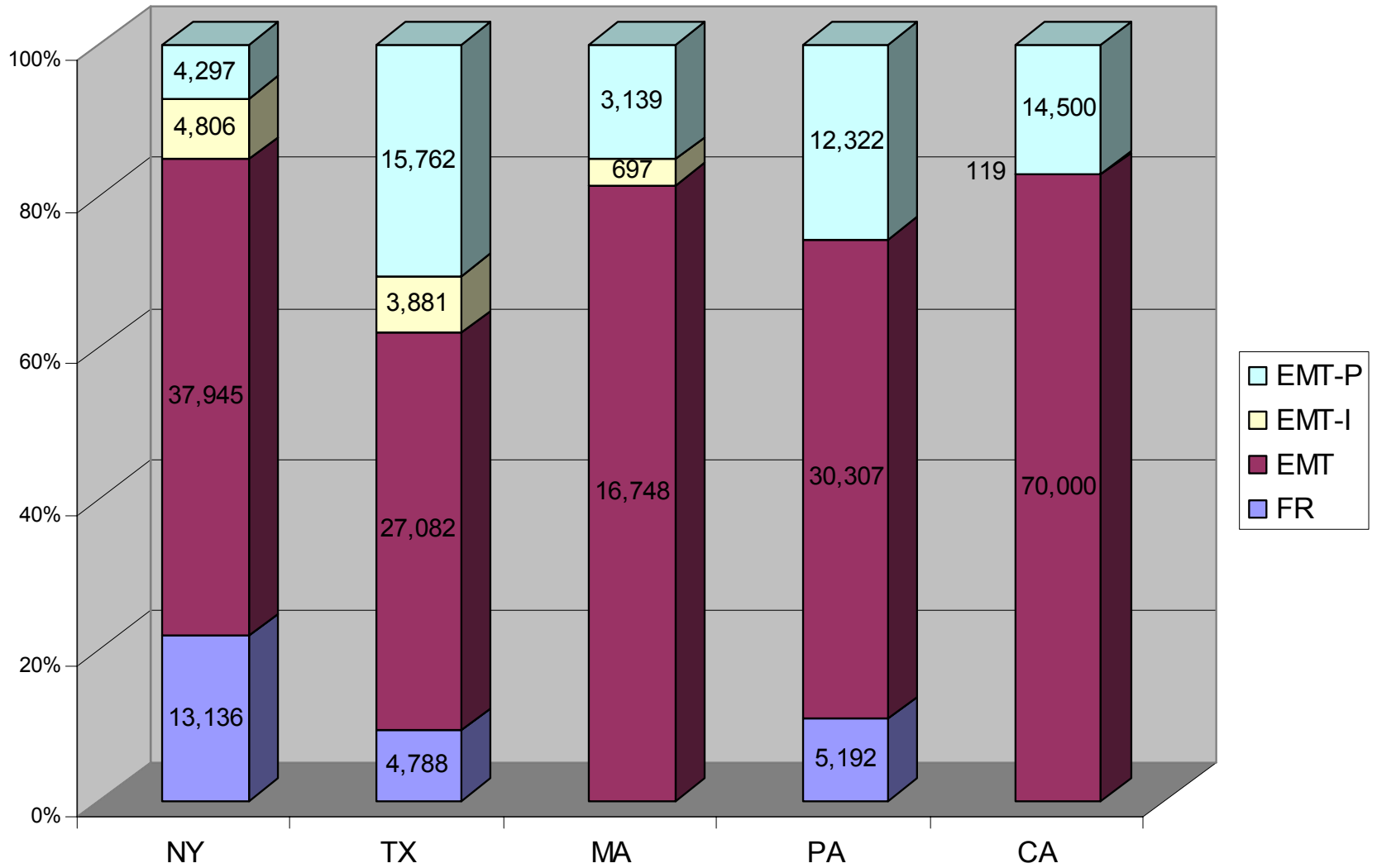
Quick Poll – Show of Hands

- How many BLS providers in the room?
- ALS?
- How many BLS agencies in the room?
 - Transport?
 - Transport time >15 minutes, > 25 minutes?
 - ALS backup available or load and go?
 - QRS?

Why focus on BLS Scope of Practice?

- Vast majority of EMS providers in U.S. are EMTs

EMS Provider by Level, 2005



Source: EMS Magazine 2005 Annual Survey

Why focus on BLS Scope of Practice?

- 132 (63%) of the 212 collegiate EMS agencies provide BLS only
- Importance of effective BLS skills
 - Gathering of Eagles faculty talked primarily about BLS care
- Shortage of Paramedics / relative unavailability of ALS resources

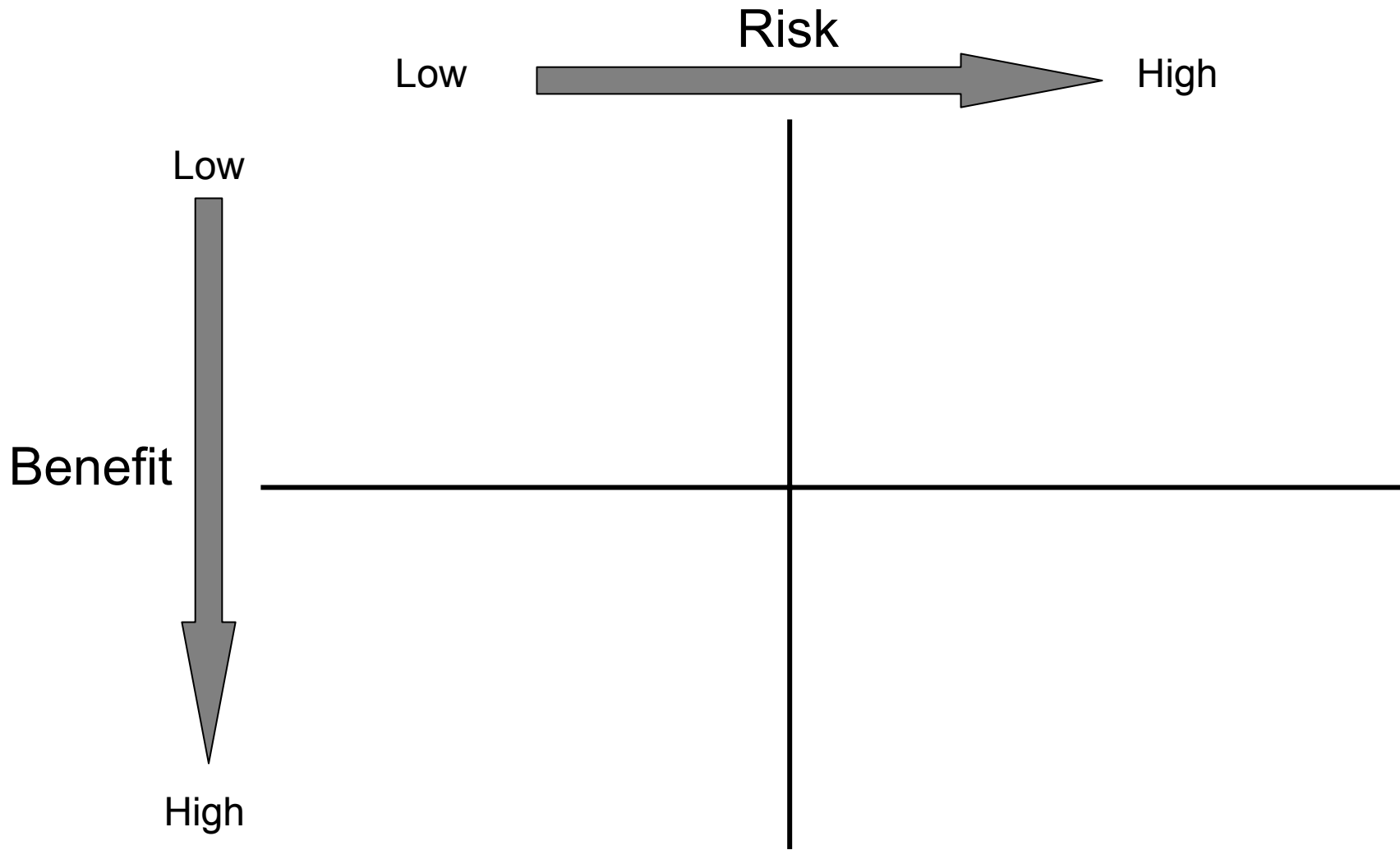
What does the public expect from EMS?

- Rapid response
- To be told what is being done to them & treated with compassion
- To have their needs met (i.e. correct acute medical conditions and/or relieve pain)
- Safe transportation to the ER

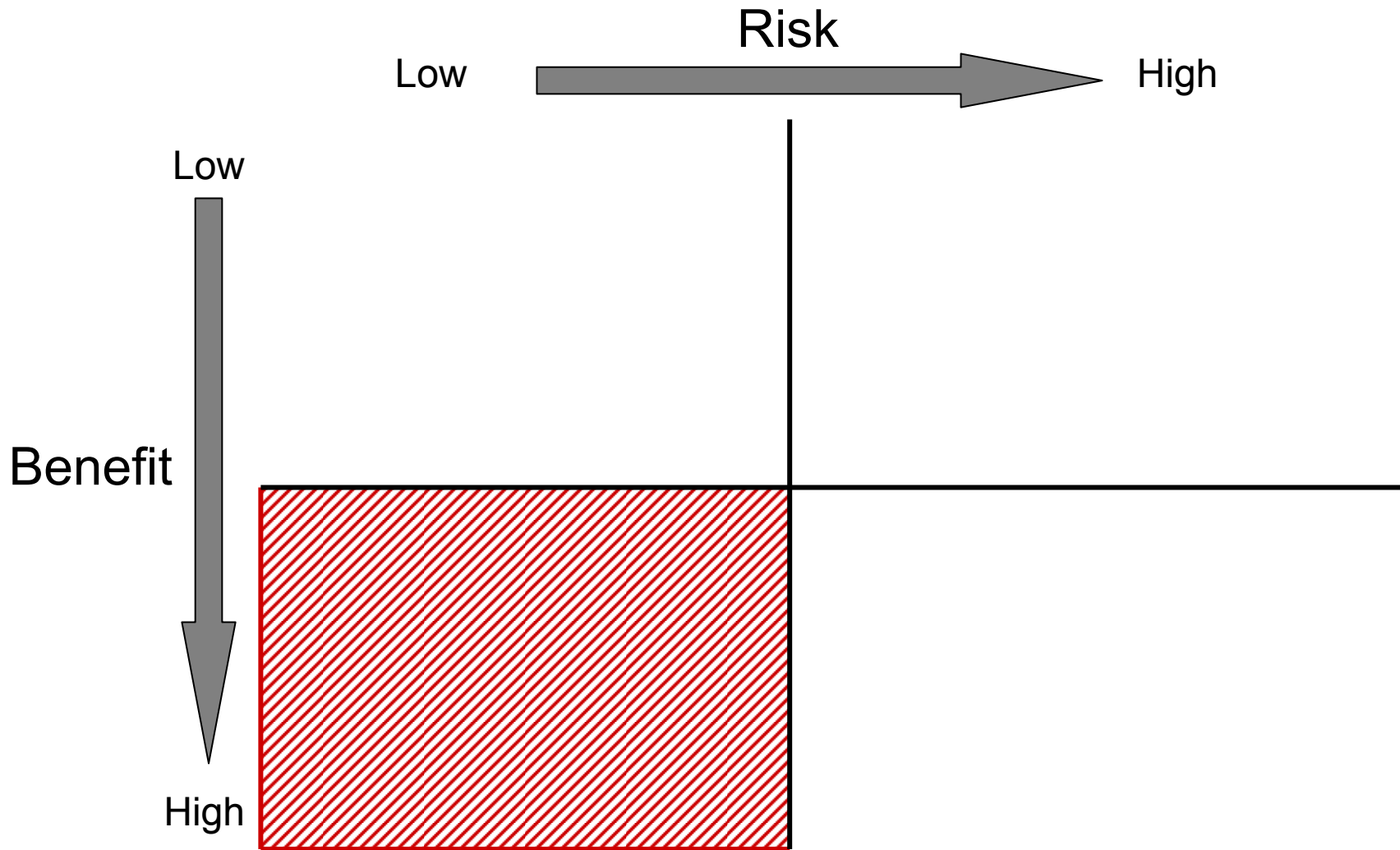
How well does BLS meet the patient's needs?

- Does BLS respond quickly?
 - YES (in most cases)
 - Does BLS treat patients with compassion & communicate well?
 - YES (hopefully)
 - Does BLS address the patient's medical condition?
 - *Yes (with room for improvement)*
 - Does BLS provide safe transportation?
 - YES (hopefully)
-

Risk Versus Benefit



Risk Versus Benefit



Other Considerations

- Availability of ALS
- Transport time
- Initial & Ongoing Training Implications (QI)
- Cost

Scope of Practice for Various Skill Levels

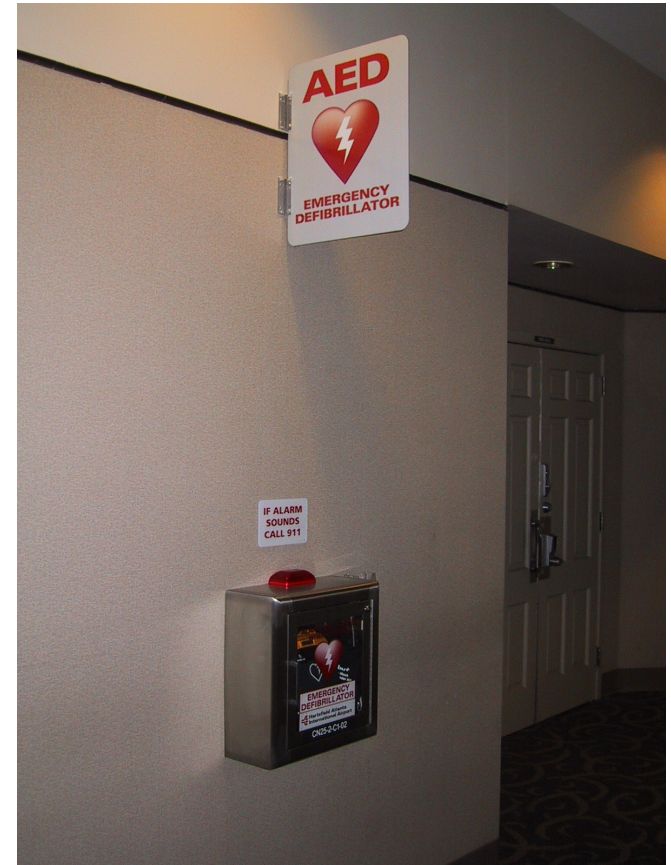
What is the primary difference between BLS and ALS certificate holders?

What enables us to expand the BLS scope of practice?

- **Advances in Medicine**
- **Advances in Technology**

Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS

- Defibrillation



Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS

- Inhaled Bronchodilators / Albuterol



Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS

- Epinephrine (EpiPen)



Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS

- SL Nitroglycerin



Current BLS Skills that used to be ALS

- Blood Glucose Monitoring



Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- 12 Lead ECG Acquisition & Transmission
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Low / Moderate / High



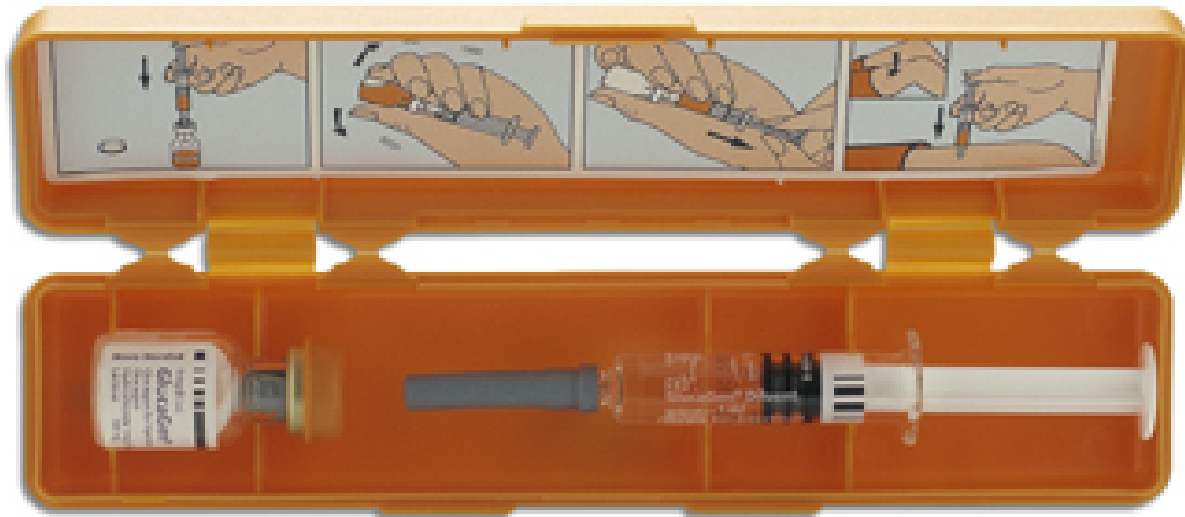
Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- Aspirin administration
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Low / High / Low



Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- Intramuscular Glucagon
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Moderate / High / Low - Moderate



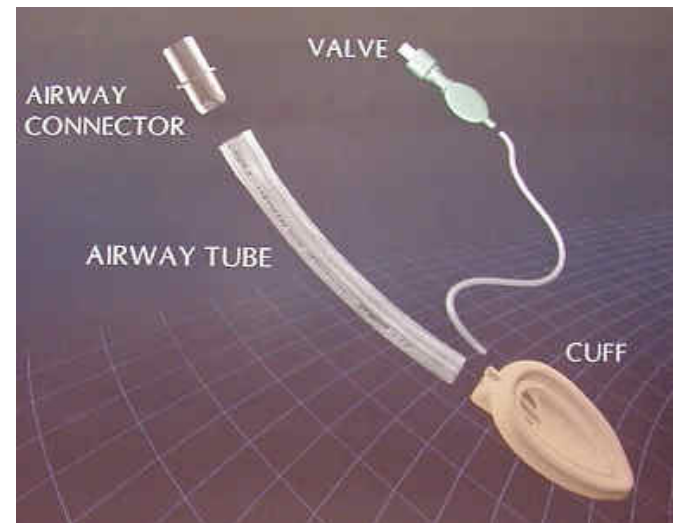
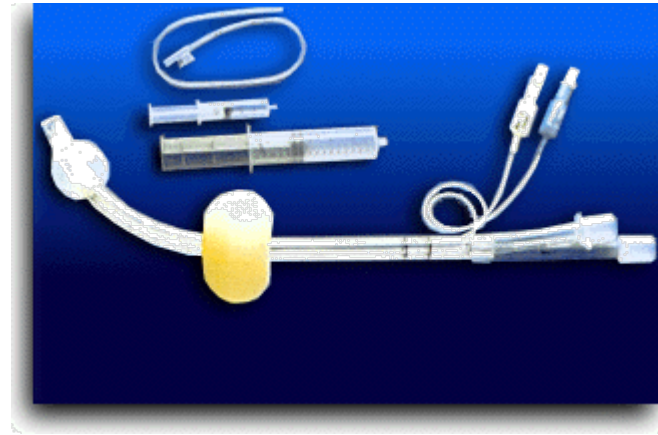
Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)
- Risk / Benefit / Costs?
- Low / High / Moderate



Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- Invasive Airway Procedures (Combitube, LMA)
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Moderate / Low-Moderate / Moderate



Current ALS Skills that could be pushed to BLS

- Pain Management – Nitrous Oxide
- Risk / Benefit / Costs?
- Low / High / Moderate

Exploring the future BLS scope of practice

- Parenteral medication administration
- Should EMTs be trained / permitted to establish IV access?
- What if a device were developed to make establishing vascular access easier?

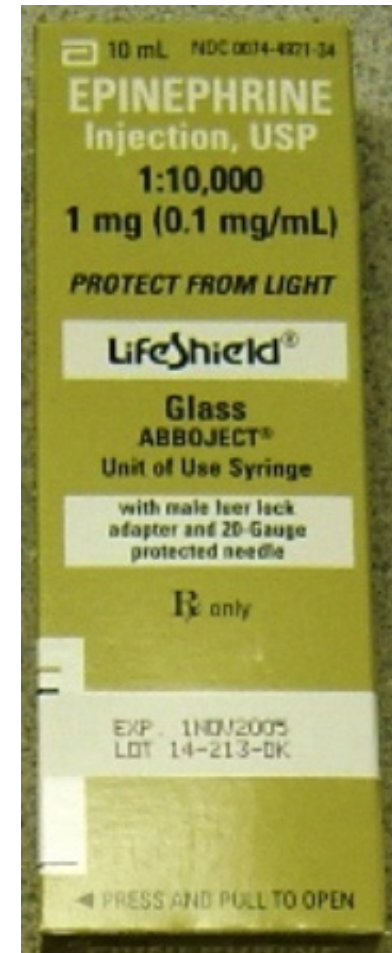
Exploring the future BLS scope of practice

- Adult Intraosseous (IO) Access & Infusion
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Low-Moderate / Moderate / Moderate



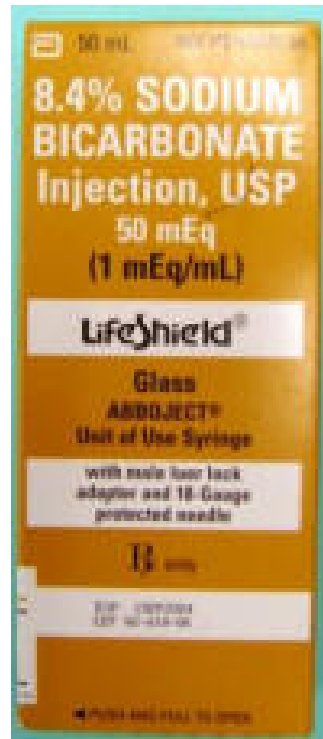
Exploring the future BLS scope of practice

- Epinephrine 1:10,000
- Risks / Benefits / Costs?
- Low / Moderate / Low



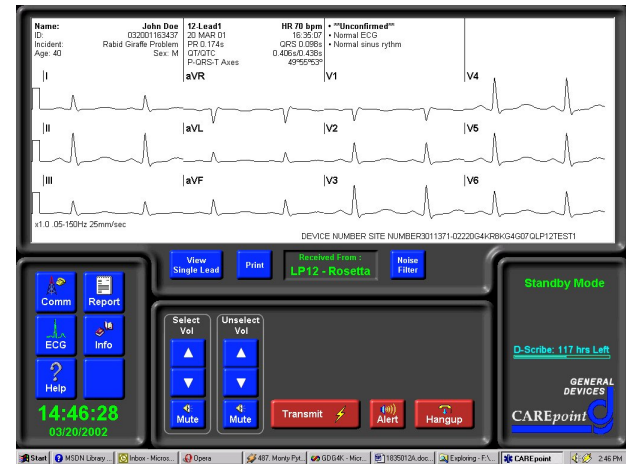
Exploring the future BLS scope of practice

- What about these?



How can we do that?!

■ Telemedicine



Is this far-fetched?



Conclusions

- EMS has advanced tremendously & continues to do so
- Developments in medicine, technology, and other external forces require us to constantly examine the status quo
- Additional advances in BLS scope of practice are possible and should be considered

CLOSE TO HOME

by John McPherson



“PSSST! Stevie! It’s Mom. Put these on. They’re fresh from the wash!”

Questions, Comments



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