

April 8, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS<sup>®</sup>) Course sponsored by the Committee on Trauma of the American College of Surgeons has a long tradition of facilitating education of Resident and Attending Physicians as well as Advanced Practice Providers (APPs) in the care of the injured patient. We have worked with institutions and residency programs to provide Courses to meet the needs of our Course participants as well as the requirements set by such institutions and programs.

The current experience with COVID-19 and its expected aftermath leads us to assume that there will be a significant backlog of persons who will need/want to take ATLS once this crisis abates. As you know, ATLS was intended to be an educational program primarily; for physician trainees, it should be a supplement to the education they receive on their trauma rotation. For other practitioners, it should enhance the knowledge they received during their training. We are aware that some institutions and programs require certain practitioners to have completed ATLS prior to starting work in the Emergency Department or rotating on a Trauma Service.

Recognizing this extraordinary situation, we are encouraging some flexibility with regard to such requirements and propose the following:

- We have already granted year-long extensions to current ATLS Providers whose verification expires in 2020. Although we cannot print out new cards for these Providers, you may take this letter as official confirmation from the ATLS Program that we consider their verification status as current.
- For any Physician or APP who needs to take ATLS for the first time we suggest the following staged approach to completing the Course if it is a requirement for employment or rotating on a Trauma service:
  - The Physician or APP can register for an ATLS Course by contacting a local ATLS Site Coordinator.
  - Following instructions from ACS ATLS Staff, you will create a “hybrid” course in the new Course Management System (launch date April 20).
  - Upon registration, they will be given access to online modules that contain the didactic educational component of the ATLS Course. Employers and Residency Program Directors may then choose to require completion of these online modules (which can be documented using our Course Management System) prior to beginning employment or starting a Trauma Rotation.
  - Per our protocols, anyone who registers using this staged approach will have six months from the time they register to complete the ATLS in-person components (Skill Stations, Initial Assessment Patient Testing, and a Written Post-test). Once they complete these successfully, they will be issued a formal ATLS Card and they will be considered full ATLS Providers

- This staged approach is intended to be temporary. Once we assess that we are adequately addressing the anticipated backlog, we will resume normal conduct of Courses and the staged approach to completion will no longer be an option.
- We recommend to residency programs that scheduling priority be given to intermediate- and senior-level residents as ATLS Courses resume. This will ease some of the stress on the back end as these residents are applying for jobs or applying to sit their Boards.

We appreciate your working with us during this highly unusual situation. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.



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