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Letters to the Editor

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Lessons from the Rosenbaum tragedy

In the article "Medics will be tested on skills" (Metropolitan, Wednesday), David C. Lipscomb reports on a novel approach to assessing the competency of the District's paramedics. The entire paramedic work force will be independently evaluated by the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, an academic training arm of the University of Maryland, through a series of cognitive and performance-based skills assessments utilizing the latest in simulation technology.

Fire Chief Dennis L. Rubin and fire department medical director Dr. Michael D. Williams are to be commended for taking this bold step, particularly given the uncertainty of the outcome. Despite the reported assertion by the family of late journalist David E. Rosenbaum that it is satisfied with the progress that the city is making in reforming the Fire and Emergency Medical Services department, there remains a long way to go before public and professional confidence in the system is restored.

It is my hope that Chief Rubin and Dr. Williams include competency in the advanced life-support response to children our most vulnerable citizens, particularly in the back of a city ambulance as part of this objective evaluation effort. If not, it will only be a matter of time before a pediatric Rosenbaum case emerges.

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