



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 21, 2020

Pennsylvania Suspends Some Nurse Licensing Requirements to Aid Coronavirus Response

Harrisburg, PA — The Department of State has suspended certain administrative requirements for nurses, including temporarily extending license expiration dates and waiving associated fees during the coronavirus emergency.

“We are taking this action to ensure that Pennsylvania has plenty of nurses available to treat patients and that these nurses do not have to worry about renewing their licenses while responding to COVID-19,” Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar said. “This measure also frees more than 14,000 nurse practitioners to be more flexible in meeting public-health needs in the weeks to come.”

Additional suspensions during this time mean that:

- Temporary nursing practice permits and graduate permits will be extended beyond one year and extension fees will be waived.
- Registered Nurses will not have to apply for extensions of their RN graduate or temporary permits. All temporary and graduate permits that would normally expire during the next 90 days will be automatically extended for an additional 90 days.
- Practical Nurses will not have to apply for extensions of their PN graduate or temporary permits. All temporary and graduate permits that would normally expire during the next 90 days will be automatically extended for an additional 90 days.
- Registered Nurses, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) and Certified Nurse Specialists (CNS) can continue to care for patients if their licenses are currently “in renewal” and set to expire on April 30, 2020. These licenses will be extended for an additional three months until July 31, 2020.
- Nursing school graduates who:
 - have been issued “Authorizations to Test” by the board, and
 - have been unable to sit for the licensure examinations due to cancellation of the examinations because of COVID-19, and
 - do not already have a graduate permit

can immediately apply for a graduate permit so they can assist in the COVID-19 response. The graduate permit authorizes graduate nurses to practice under supervision of a registered nurse until they can take the examinations. The permits expire if the graduate permit holder fails the examination.

- More than 14,000 CRNPs can practice to their full capabilities and assist in the COVID-19 response without the usual requirement that they practice within a specific clinical specialty. They also are allowed to prescribe drugs outside the established formulary.
- On a CRNP's initial application for prescription-writing authority, the State Board of Nursing will require only one collaborative physician and one substitute physician, rather than the entire list of substitutes.
- In the event that board-recognized national CRNP certification examinations become unavailable during the coronavirus emergency, CRNPs will not have to hold national certification in a particular specialty.
- Out-of-state applicants for certification as a CRNP by endorsement in Pennsylvania, who are active licensees of other states and have national certification, will not have to meet the educational equivalence requirement.

Earlier this week, the Department of State's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs announced that in-state and out-of-state health care practitioners can treat patients via [telemedicine during the coronavirus](#) emergency.

The Department of State is working with the governor's office, the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to [identify regulations and requirements](#) that can be suspended to give medical providers and facilities the flexibility they need to respond to COVID-19. The Department of State website will be updated regularly as additional requirement suspension information becomes available.