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Pennsylvania is Reinforcing the Health Care System to Fight COVID-19

[All Health Care Licensing Waivers](#)

Harrisburg, PA – As Pennsylvania’s frontline health care workers tirelessly care for patients amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the state is acting to reinforce their ranks by increasing the number of workers and supplies for the health care system. In recent days the state has streamlined the process for retired doctors, nurses, medical students, pharmacists, and other healthcare workers, allowed out-of-state practitioners to practice in Pennsylvania, expanded telemedicine, and launched a portal to purchase supplies.

“Pennsylvania is reinforcing the ranks of our doctors, nurses and other health care providers during this emergency,” said Governor Wolf. “We have streamlined the process for retired health care workers to return to work and provide relief so those on the frontline can focus on providing care to patients. We’re also expanding the use of telemedicine and supporting and protecting health care workers by helping to purchase the necessary equipment and supplies they will need.

“All of these steps are about saving lives and giving our health care system time to prepare for the expected increase in patients. I commend all of the health care workers across our state for your dedication to serving and caring for others at this unprecedented time.”

The Department of State has announced a series of temporary licensing waivers for health care professionals and others during the COVID-19 disaster declaration. The waivers reduce administrative barriers to support the health care system and carry out their health care work with unnecessary burdens.

The temporary license waivers for health care workers include:

Health Care Professionals:

- [Streamlining the reactivation of licenses](#) for retired Medical Doctors, Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine, Physician Assistants, Respiratory Therapists, Perfusionists, Registered Nurses, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners

and Pharmacists to return to their field, and 119 applications have been received in the past three weeks.

- Allowing licensed health care practitioners to [provide services via telemedicine](#).
- Allowing doctors with institutional licenses to [practice at more than 2 facilities](#).
- [Encouraged the use of telemedicine access](#) for opioid use disorder Centers of Excellence patients.

Nursing:

- Allowing more than 14,000 Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners to assist in the COVID-19 response by [lifting the requirement that they practice within a specialty](#).
- [Extending license deadlines](#), temporary nursing permits and graduate permits.
- Allowing certain nursing school graduates to [apply for an immediate graduate permit](#).

Pharmacy:

- [Allowing out-of-state pharmacies](#) to ship goods to Pennsylvania.
- Allowing temporary expedited licensure for certain pharmacy practitioners and pharmacies.

The Department of State has a dedicated webpage with [information about all of the temporary licensing waivers](#).

To further bolster the health care systems, Governor Tom Wolf [signed legislation](#) yesterday to spend up to \$50 million to purchase medical equipment and supplies, such as more beds, ventilators and personal protective equipment, for hospitals, nursing homes, and emergency workers to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Wolf administration is also expediting the purchase of critical medical supplies for the health care system with a new [Critical Medical Supplies Procurement Portal](#). A [joint effort](#) between the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Health, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Community and Economic Development, the portal is for manufacturers, distributors and other suppliers to inform the state of supplies that can be quickly purchased for medical providers, emergency responders, and health care professionals.

The governor [announced](#) nearly three weeks ago that all major health insurers providing comprehensive medical coverage in the commonwealth cover medically appropriate COVID-19 diagnostic testing and associated treatment for consumers and have committed to waive any cost-sharing for the testing.

Earlier today, the Department of Health [announced](#) 533 additional positive cases of COVID-19, bringing the statewide total to 2,751 in 56 counties. The department also reported 12 new deaths among positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 34.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, Pennsylvanians should visit pa.gov/COVID-19.