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Wolf Administration Discusses Positive Impact of Emergency Disaster Declaration for Patients, Doctors, Nurses and Other Healthcare Professionals

Licensing waivers allow for flexible response during a disaster incident

Harrisburg, PA – From providing telemedicine in a patient’s home to administering vaccines at community vaccination clinics, Department of Health Acting Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson and Professional and Occupational Affairs Commissioner Kalonji Johnson today outlined how the ongoing emergency disaster declaration is allowing doctors, nurses, and other licensed healthcare professionals to provide quality patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The current emergency disaster declaration has allowed us to quickly respond to the changing needs of our hundreds of thousands of licensees – including nearly 500,000 healthcare professionals – during this once-in-a-generation pandemic,” said Professional and Occupational Affairs Commissioner Kalonji Johnson. “We have been able to streamline administrative processes so that Pennsylvanians continue getting the health care they need, and licensees can focus on caring for their patients.”

Since March 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of State has received approval for [nearly 100 waivers of licensing regulations](#) under the Governor’s [COVID-19 Emergency Disaster Declaration](#). Focused on essential public health and safety needs and licensing requirements, the department’s staff has worked with board members and other stakeholders throughout the commonwealth to identify waivers that would quickly and safely free up every available healthcare professional who wanted to assist in any way, including [retirees](#), [military](#) and [out-of-state](#) practitioners.

Most notably, waivers have allowed for Pennsylvanians to access telemedicine services so that they could have a doctor’s visit from the comfort and safety of their home without having to go into a doctor’s office.

In addition, Pennsylvanians who have received a COVID-19 vaccine at a mass vaccination site or their local pharmacy have benefited directly from the waivers provided under the emergency disaster declaration. More than a dozen [vaccine-related waivers](#) issued by the administration have allowed more healthcare providers to administer vaccines at vaccination sites across the state.

“To meet the need of increasing the number of healthcare practitioners during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of State stepped up to help practitioners receive temporary licenses to provided quality patient care during COVID-19 response,” Acting Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson said. “Now with the race to vaccinate Pennsylvanians, we are working to get all Pennsylvanians age 16 and older vaccinated.

Under the current emergency disaster declaration, the vaccine-related waivers have allowed us to expand our healthcare provider network so that more independent pharmacies and physicians can offer vaccines across the commonwealth.”

For more information on the Department of State’s COVID-19 licensing waivers, [visit the department’s website](#).

NOTE: Video, audio, and photos from this press conference will be available at [pacast.com](#).