



Recommendations for Medical License Portability During COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the United States has resulted in emergency declarations by all 50 states, territories and the District of Columbia. Emergency declarations provide these jurisdictions flexibility in managing their responses to this public health emergency, including waiving general licensure requirements for health care professionals. As a result, more than 25 state medical and osteopathic boards that have implemented temporary rules and regulations for expedited licensure and portability to help ensure a robust healthcare workforce.

The rapid changes being implemented to respond to this emergency require state medical boards to cooperate and support their states and each other in this effort by providing licensure information¹ and continuing their mission to protect the public. To assist in those efforts, the FSMB has developed recommendations for federal, state, and local governments and government agencies seeking emergency changes to licensure requirements.

These recommendations ensure that attempts to address workforce issues through modifications to existing state licensure requirements contain safeguards that ensure that care being provided balances public health with public safety:

Eligibility: Physicians and Physician Assistants (PAs) receiving expedited licensure or reciprocity need to be duly licensed to practice medicine in at least one state or territory and not have been subjected to discipline by a licensing agency in any state, federal, or foreign jurisdiction, excluding any administrative actions such as non-payment of fees or failure to comply with continuing medical education requirements related to a license.

Verification: Physicians or PAs seeking expedited licensure or reciprocity must be employed or under an obligation to a hospital, government agency, managed

¹ **FSMB Public Policy Compendium 240.4 License Portability During a Public Health Emergency**

Resolved that state medical boards cooperate and support each other to further license portability in the event of a public health emergency and assist FSMB in verifying licensure and qualifications by regularly providing FSMB with licensure and contact information on all licensees. HD, April 2006

care facility, placement service, or medical group or clinical practice who will perform a verification of physician's eligibility to provide care (licensure status and disciplinary history) with FSMB's Physician Data Center (PDC).

Duration: The ability to practice across state lines via emergency expedited licensure or reciprocity should be limited to the duration of the declaration of the state of emergency, including any extensions, within the state where the patient is located.

Documentation: Any provider-patient interaction, whether in-person or through telemedicine, should be documented in the patient's medical record.

These recommendations were drafted based off existing FSMB policies. Since 2002, FSMB policy has mandated the organization cooperate "with federal and state legislators, agencies, and organizations in facilitating the movement of properly licensed physicians among FSMB member licensing jurisdictions in support of necessary emergency medical response."² Additionally, the FSMB adopted a [resolution](#) in 2019 that required the FSMB to "evaluate the experiences and disaster readiness of state medical and osteopathic boards and develop recommendations to facilitate the interstate mobility of properly licensed physicians and other health care personnel in response to disasters, public health emergencies, and mass casualties."

To assist in implementation of these recommendations, the FSMB is also offering access to the Physician Data Center (PDC) free of charge, for 30 days, for hospitals and other eligible parties. The PDC is continuously updated and is the most comprehensive repository of physician licensure information in the country. Users are able to instantly verify licensure information and disciplinary history for the more than 1 million licensed physicians and physician assistants in the United States. More information on emergency access to the PDC is available [here](#).

FSMB is dedicated to helping ensure the sharing of essential information that can be used to verify licenses and credentials for physicians and other health care professionals who are being mobilized to provide care to patients as a result of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

For more information on how the FSMB and state medical boards are working to respond to this pandemic, please visit FSMB's [COVID -19 webpage](#). The site features resources and information for state medical boards and the public, including a state-by-state analysis of these efforts.

About the Federation of State Medical Boards:

² **FSMB Public Policy Compendium 240.6 Disaster Preparedness and Licensing**

The FSMB will cooperate with federal and state legislators, agencies, and organizations in facilitating the movement of properly licensed physicians among FSMB member licensing jurisdictions in support of necessary emergency medical response. HD, April 2002

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national non-profit organization representing the 71 medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. The FSMB serves as the voice for state medical boards, supporting them through education, assessment, research and advocacy while providing services and initiatives that promote patient safety, quality health care and regulatory best practices. The FSMB serves the public through Docinfo.org, a free physician search tool which provides background information on the nearly 1 million doctors in the United States. To learn more about FSMB, visit www.fsmb.org and follow FSMB on Twitter ([@theFSMB](https://twitter.com/theFSMB)).