



Iowa Board of Nursing

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MEMORANDUM

To: Nurse Licensees, Nursing Employers and Nurse Educators

From: Kathy Weinberg, Executive Director

Date: July 29, 2021

Subject: Resuming Compliance with Rules No Longer Suspended by Proclamation of Disaster Emergency

In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Governor Kim Reynolds has issued [multiple Proclamations](#) suspending certain regulatory provisions in an effort to provide additional necessary resources and measures to respond to the public health disaster emergency. On July 23, 2021, Governor Reynolds issued a new Proclamation that did not extend the suspension of rules that affect professional licensing boards, including the Board of Nursing. The Board issues this guidance to outline resuming compliance with previously suspended rules.

Nurses Licensed in Non-Compact States

A nurse who holds an active nursing license in another state may provide emergency medical services in response to proclaimed state of emergency. See Iowa Admin. Code r. 655—3.2(2)(c). Accordingly, nurses who are licensed in another jurisdiction that is not a member of the Nurse Licensure Compact, and whose licenses are in good standing, may immediately begin providing nursing care to aid the COVID-19 pandemic without first seeking an Iowa license through endorsement. The authority to provide nursing services on a non-Compact state license ends immediately upon the termination of the public health disaster emergency.

PRIOR LICENSING PROVISIONS THAT ARE NO LONGER IN EFFECT AND TIME PERIODS FOR RESUMING COMPLIANCE

Nurses Whose Licenses Expired or Lapsed Within the Last Five Years: Governor Reynolds previously authorized nurses whose license lapsed or expired within the last five (5) years to provide nursing services to COVID-19 patients without first reactivating their license. This Proclamation provision expired on July 23, 2021. All nurses who were providing nursing services to COVID-19 patients without first reactivating their license must reactivate their license within sixty (60) days of the Proclamation ending, which is **September 21, 2021**. Nurses who fail to reactivate by September 21, 2021, but who

continue to practice nursing beyond that date may be subject to discipline for practicing on an inactive license.

License Renewals and Continuing Education. Governor Reynolds previously suspended rules relating to continuing education and license renewal deadlines. These Proclamation provisions expired on July 23, 2021. If your license expired on or before July 23 and you chose not to renew, you must submit your completed renewal application within sixty (60) days of the Proclamation ending, which is **September 21, 2021**. Failure to submit renewal application by September 21, 2021, will result in license deactivation. If your license expires after July 23, 2021, you must submit your renewal materials as normal pursuant to rule 655—3.7. If you anticipate experiencing undue hardship in complying with the terms of rule 3.7, you should contact the Board for assistance.

Simulation and Clinical Hours. Governor Reynolds previously suspended the requirement of rule 655—2.10(7)(a), which mandated that a simulation component not exceed 50% of total clinical hours in a nursing education course. This Proclamation provision expired on July 23, 2021. Nursing courses that began before the Proclamation provision expired may continue to rely on the prior waiver of the 50% limitation. Any nursing courses that begin after July 23, 2021, must be in accordance with rule 655—2.10(7)(a).

Emergency Licenses. Governor Reynolds previously authorized the Board to issue emergency licenses to nurses who have not yet obtained initial licenses in Iowa, so long as the nurses have completed sufficient minimum education as determined by the Board. This Proclamation provision expired on May 27, 2021, and thus the Board no longer has the authority to issue emergency licenses. Previous guidance from the Board provided that emergency licenses would expire on July 26, 2021. Accordingly, **all emergency licenses are now expired**. If you held an emergency license and have not been issued a full license, you may not practice nursing until you have satisfied all the requirements for, and have been issued by the Board, a standard, non-emergency license.

Criminal Background Checks. Governor Reynolds, previously suspended requirements to complete a criminal background check as a condition for obtaining a professional license. This Proclamation provision expired on May 27, 2021, and thus the Board's prior rules requiring a completed background check as a condition for LPN and RN licensure are back in effect. Prior guidance from the Board provided that if you were issued a license without completing a criminal background check, you were **required to return the completed fingerprint packet and signed waiver by July 26, 2021**. This deadline has now passed, and individuals who fail to timely submit their background check materials will have their licenses rescinded.

Testing Period. Governor Reynolds, through a provision within her Proclamations of Disaster Emergency, previously suspended the requirement of rule 655—3.4(4), which required nursing applicants to take NCLEX examination within ninety-one (91) days of receiving Board authorization to test. This Proclamation provision expired on May 27,

2021, and the rule is now back in effect. All applications that are received on or after May 28, 2021 will be subject to the 91-day period to take the NCLEX exam.