

Gov. Evers: Issues order to expedite expansion, enhance efficiency of healthcare workforce

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andres Palm today exercised their authority under Article V, Section 4 of the Wisconsin Constitution and Sections 323.12(4) and 252.02(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes to simplify healthcare license renewals during the COVID-19 public health emergency and to encourage recently retired professionals with expired licenses to re-enter practice. This order is available [here](#). It provides an avenue for licensed out-of-state practitioners to practice in Wisconsin without first requiring an in-state credential. It also eliminates time limits for temporary licenses.

The order also has provisions designed to enable nursing students close to graduation to be a part of the state's COVID-19 response by adjusting some clinical education requirements. It suspends practice restrictions for advanced practice nurses, enabling them to more efficiently and effectively respond during the COVID-19 crisis. Finally, the order provides flexibility to physician assistants in order to meet the current unpredictable changes in emergency needs.

The order is effective immediately and will remain in effect through the duration of the public health emergency.

“Our healthcare professionals are on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, and it is critical that we maximize the size of our work force and eliminate unnecessary barriers so we can effectively meet the demand for care,” said Gov. Evers. “Remember, while our health systems respond to COVID-19, they also must continue to care for patients with other conditions and issues, such as cancer or accidental injury, that require ongoing or immediate attention. This action will ensure that more Wisconsinites get the care they need,

when they need it.”

The order eliminates some late renewal fees for individuals whose licenses have lapsed and provides the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) with flexibility to eliminate other fees when needed. This is designed to simplify the licensing process for retirees or others who left their professions in good standing for other reasons by easing or eliminating certain credentialing renewal requirements, such as the need to earn specified numbers of continuing education units, so that returning providers can focus on direct patient care and not activities that take them away from the front lines or the bedside.

“We have heard from many providers who are eager to return to practice and help respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Other providers want the flexibility to go where the need is greatest and respond as fully and efficiently as possible,” said DSPS Secretary-designee Dawn Crim. “This order will better position Wisconsin’s healthcare workforce to deal with this public health emergency.”

This order suspending rules is issued along with clarifying companion emergency orders. Collectively they apply to a number of different healthcare providers, including but not limited to nurses, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, physical therapists, chiropractors, dentists, psychologists, counselors, and radiographers. Each profession is governed by different rules, so please see order for details.