



NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF **CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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Emergency Graduate Licensure Program To Support New Jersey's COVID-19 Response

Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

May 5, 2020

Providers are encouraged to check the Division of Consumer Affairs [website](#) for additional information.

The State of New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub is [here](#).
The NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Information Hub for Health Care Providers is [here](#).

Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is the disease caused by a new coronavirus first detected in humans in December 2019. The State of New Jersey has implemented extraordinary measures to combat the spread of the disease, including through actions taken by Governor Philip D. Murphy to expand the capacity of New Jersey’s healthcare system to meet increased demand.

On May 5, 2020, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs announced its Emergency Graduate Licensure Program, established pursuant to a new law signed by Governor Murphy on April 14, 2020. The Emergency Graduate Licensure Program is now open to eligible recent graduates of nursing, physician assistant, pharmacy, and respiratory care therapy education and training programs.

For nurses, physician assistants, and pharmacists, eligibility is limited to graduates of accredited programs in New Jersey who graduated within the last six months. For respiratory care therapists, eligibility is limited to graduates of accredited programs located in any State who graduated within the last six months.

This document includes basic information that recent graduates need in order to take advantage of this opportunity to help their fellow New Jersey residents during the current emergency, including additional information about the eligibility requirements.

Applicants can apply on the Division of Consumer Affairs website [here](#). The Division has waived application fees, so it is free to apply, and aims to process each application promptly.

After obtaining an emergency graduate license, you should work with your school to identify work opportunities in New Jersey acute care hospitals (for nurses, physician assistants and pharmacists) and in acute care or field hospitals (for respiratory care therapists). If you are unable to obtain a position through your school, please go to the Department of Health’s [portal](#) for healthcare professionals who are willing and able to support New Jersey’s response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department of Health will work to connect you with opportunities where your skills are most needed. You will need to input your new license number and other basic information into that portal.

If you are interested in joining this fight, read our Frequently Asked Questions below and then apply [here](#).

Q: Which healthcare professions are included in the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program?

The program is open to nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, and respiratory care therapists. For nurses, the program is open to registered nurses (RNs) and practical nurses (LPNs).

Q: I graduated from my professional education program in 2018 but didn’t get a license. Am I eligible for the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program?

No. Individuals are eligible only if they graduated within six months of applying. If you graduated earlier, you may still be eligible for a standard license.

Q: I received my healthcare professional degree in another state or country. Do I qualify for the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program?

For nurses, physician assistants, and pharmacists, only graduates of accredited New Jersey education and training programs are eligible for the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program.

For respiratory care therapists, graduates of an accredited respiratory care therapy program located in any State are eligible.

Graduates of programs that do not meet these criteria, including programs located in other countries, are not eligible for emergency graduate licenses at this time, but may be eligible for standard licenses.

Q: If I have taken and failed my licensure examination, can I still obtain an emergency graduate license?

Eligibility for emergency graduate licenses is limited to applicants who have not previously taken and failed their licensing exam.

Q: If I am granted an emergency graduate license and then fail my licensure exam, will I lose my emergency graduate license?

The holder of an existing emergency graduate license is required to cease practicing upon receiving notice that they failed to pass their licensing examination.

Q: What information will I need to apply for my emergency graduate license?

All applicants will need to create an account to access the Division's online application system. Once you log in, the application form will ask you to provide and certify the truth and accuracy of the following information:

- Name
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number
- Address
- Citizenship Status
- Educational History
- Criminal History Information
- Information about illegal use of controlled dangerous substances

Pharmacist applicants also must provide their NABP eProfile ID.

If you have a criminal history, you will be required to submit documentation sufficient to indicate the subject, circumstances, and resolution of the matter.

Q: How is the emergency graduate license application process different from the standard application process?

Applicants for emergency graduate licenses submit an abbreviated application, and are not required to pass an examination or undergo a full criminal history background check, as required as part of the standard application process. The only fee that is required for an emergency graduate license is the fee for the standard application. The Division will work with schools to confirm that applicants have graduated.

Q: How can I apply for an emergency graduate license?

First, you must initiate the process of applying for a standard license. Please go [here](#) to begin this process. Once you have done so, click [here](#) to complete an emergency graduate license application.

Q: I have been arrested or convicted of a crime. Can I still participate?

You may not be eligible for this program if you have been arrested or convicted of certain crimes. If this applies to you and you still wish to have your board consider your application, please submit a request to the applicable board from which you are seeking licensure.

Applicants for an emergency graduate license are required to submit information that may result in the denial of their application, as a matter of the DCA Director's discretion. Such information also may delay the Division's processing of an application.

Q: How long will it take to get an emergency graduate license, and what will my license look like?

If your application is complete and you qualify for licensure, DCA's goal is to provide you with a license promptly. Your license will come in the form of an email confirmation with an emergency graduate license number stating that your graduate license is active. You will not receive a paper license, but your emergency graduate license number will be displayed as "active" on the Division's licensure look-up system.

Processing may take longer for some applicants.

Q: For how long will the Division be accepting applications for emergency graduate licenses?

The Division may stop accepting new applications at any time. Interested graduates are encouraged to apply now.

Q: I don't have malpractice liability insurance or other insurance. Should I get coverage?

Physician assistants licensed in New Jersey, including holders of physician assistant emergency graduate licenses, are required by law and regulation to be covered by malpractice liability insurance. Because physician assistant emergency graduate licensees will be working in acute care hospitals, such licensees may be covered under those hospitals' insurance policies. Emergency graduate licensees should confirm with their employers that they will be covered, and that the coverage will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including Physician Assistant Advisory Committee regulations regarding minimum coverage amounts.

The Division also recommends that all holders of emergency graduate licenses secure suitable insurance, although it is not required as a prerequisite to obtaining an emergency graduate license. Certain healthcare professionals involved in the response to COVID-19 may have some protections from liability under state law, but the protections are limited, and generally will not include defense and indemnification.

Q: How long will my emergency graduate license be valid?

The Emergency Graduate Licensure Program will automatically expire upon the end of both the public health emergency and the state of emergency declared by Governor Murphy in Executive Order No. 103 (2020), whichever is earlier, but it may be terminated earlier by the Division of Consumer Affairs.

If the Division of Consumer Affairs determines to end the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for one or more of the relevant license categories before the program automatically expires, emergency graduate licenses may remain in effect for 120 days after the Division makes its determination.

Holders of emergency graduate licenses are strongly encouraged to continue to pursue standard licensure (including passing licensure examinations, completing the required criminal history background check, and submitting any required documents) via the standard application process, as soon as practicable. This will minimize the risk of a gap between the expiration of your emergency graduate license and the issuance of your standard license.

Q: Will I still need to sit for examination(s) after obtaining an emergency graduate license?

Holders of emergency graduate licenses must pass an examination within 90 days of the date the examination becomes readily available to be taken. The Division, in consultation with each of the four boards, will determine when examinations have become readily available to be taken. Emergency graduate licensees will be notified of the determination and reminded that they have 90 days to sit for their examination and that their emergency graduate licenses will expire 120 days after the date determined by the Division.

Q: Will I need to apply for two licenses, the emergency graduate license and the standard license? When will I apply for each license?

You will first need to submit the preliminary portion of an application for a standard license (i.e., submit a passport-style photograph, pay a fee, and complete an application questionnaire), because the Division has made *initiating* an application for the standard license a precondition for obtaining an emergency graduate license. We have done this to ensure that you start the process of applying early, and to reduce the amount of time that you may be unlicensed and unable to work between when your emergency graduate license expires and when you receive your standard license. Once you have initiated an application for a standard license, you will need to apply separately for an emergency graduate license.

Holders of emergency graduate licenses are strongly encouraged to continue to pursue standard licensure (including passing licensure examinations, completing the required criminal history background check, and submitting any required documents) via the standard application process, as soon as practicable. This will minimize the risk of a gap between the expiration of your emergency graduate license and the issuance of your standard license.

Q: Will I need to pay two application fees—one for my standard license and one for my emergency graduate license?

No. The Division will not charge fees for emergency graduate license applications. You will only need to pay one fee, at the time you apply for your standard license.

Q: Can a physician assistant practicing pursuant to an emergency graduate license prescribe controlled dangerous substances?

Your emergency graduate license will not qualify you to obtain a Controlled Dangerous Substance registration from the Division and will not qualify you to register with the State's Prescription Monitoring Program. Therefore, you will not be able to prescribe controlled dangerous substances while you hold an emergency graduate license.

Q: I heard that during the state of emergency and public health emergency, laws and rules requiring physician assistants to have a collaborative agreement and work under physician supervision were waived. If I receive a physician assistant emergency graduate license, is that true for me?

No. [Executive Order 112](#) and [Administrative Order 2020-02](#) waived laws that require physician assistants to enter collaboration agreements and be supervised, but those waivers apply only to holders of standard physician assistant licenses. The waivers do not apply to physician assistant emergency graduate licenses. Therefore, emergency graduate licensees must to enter into collaborative agreements and be supervised pursuant to existing laws and regulations.

Q: Will the Division arrange for employment or volunteer opportunities for me?

No. If you receive an emergency graduate license through this program, you should contact your school to identify work opportunities in New Jersey acute care hospitals (for nurses, physician assistants and pharmacists) or in acute care or field hospitals (for respiratory care therapists).

If you cannot obtain a position through your school, you can go to the Department of Health's [portal](#) for healthcare professionals who are willing and able to support New Jersey's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department of Health will work to connect you with opportunities where your skills are most needed. You will need to input your new license number and other basic information into that portal.

Q: Where will I be able to work once I have an emergency graduate license?

If you are a nurse (RN or LPN), physician assistant, or pharmacist emergency graduate licensee, you are permitted to work in any acute care hospital licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health.

If you are a respiratory care therapy emergency graduate licensee, you are permitted to work in any acute care or field hospital.