

Expedited Licensing Pathways Available for Health Care Workers in Response to COVID-19

The Washington State Hospital Association advocated with various state agencies and elected officials to express the need for expedited pathways to allow health care workers to provide services to patients in Washington state. As a result, the state announced several changes that will help hospitals increase staffing more rapidly to help respond to COVID-19. Please consult legal counsel with specific questions about the laws referenced below. Please consult the relevant state agency with questions about specific applications.

Practitioner Type	Licensing Pathway	Requirements & Process	Estimated Time to Receive Approval	Applicability for Telehealth/Virtual Care
<p>Broad applicability to licensed health care workers, including RN, ARNP, PA, MD, etc.</p> <p>The law applies to “health practitioners.” The term is broadly defined to mean “an individual licensed under the laws of this or another state to provide health or veterinary services.” RCW 70.15.010(8).</p> <p>Health services is also very broadly defined - RCW 70.15.010(9).</p>	<p>Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act (chapter 70.15 RCW).</p> <p>More information from DOH can be found here, including FAQs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A health practitioner must be in good standing; and 2. Apply for and be approved to register with the Department of Health as an emergency volunteer. <p>More information on the registration process can be found on the DOH FAQ webpage.</p> <p>Individuals can fill out an application, or a facility can submit a roster of potential volunteers in a spreadsheet with specific information, as listed on the DOH website (see “How do healthcare facilities request emergency volunteer health practitioners”) to WAserv@doh.wa.gov.</p>	<p>Could take as little as one day to verify that a practitioner is in good standing and approve the application.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Per DOH guidance: “RCW 70.15, the Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioners Act, can be used during the COVID-19 emergency for a health care entity in Washington State to offer telehealth or virtual care services to patients in Washington by employed providers in other states in which they operate.”</p> <p>NOTE: For a paid out-of-state licensed health care provider to be covered by RCW 70.15, he or she must meet several requirements, as listed in the DOH FAQ.</p> <p>The Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act enables professionals to</p>

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				provide virtual services more quickly but is time limited. If health care professionals feel they will be providing services for some time in Washington, the temporary practice permit option is available (see below).
RN, LPN, ARNP, and Nursing Technician	<p>The Washington State Nursing Commission has created an expedited licensing pathway to issue temporary practice permits for nurses responding to COVID-19. The temporary practice permit is the path to licensure in WA.</p> <p>General information on temporary practice permits for various professions can be found here.</p>	<p>Applicants must meet the criteria for a temporary practice permit as outlined here, and should apply using the online application portal (instructions here).</p> <p>To be considered for expedited review, hospitals should send a list of names of individuals who have submitted applications through this process to the Nursing Commission at nurselicensing@doh.wa.gov. This communication should also indicate the urgency of the request based on the criteria listed here.</p>	<p>As little as one week, assuming the applicant submits all information as requested at the time of application. The sooner the applicant completes the fingerprints, the sooner the application can be reviewed for a decision to grant or deny the permanent license.</p> <p>The Commission will prioritize flagged applications, particularly those from King and Snohomish counties.*</p> <p><i>*Prioritization as of 3/11/20, due to number of cases in those areas. Prioritization could change based on other counties experiencing multiple active COVID-19 cases.</i></p>	<p>Yes, although applying through the process outlined in the Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act will enable professionals to provide virtual services more quickly.</p>

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Physician Assistant	Expedited licensing through the Washington Medical Commission’s Physician Assistant application process and delegation agreement approval portal.	<p>Applicants must meet the Physician Assistant license requirements.</p> <p>Applicants must use the Washington State Online Portal or the Uniform application.</p> <p>The applicant must include documentation from their employer indicating they are applying due to a COVID-19 surge capacity request.</p>	<p>As little as five business days, assuming the applicant submits all materials as requested correctly and completely at the time of application.</p> <p>The Washington Medical Commission Online Delegation Agreement approval portal allows for same-day approval of delegation agreements.</p>	Yes, although applying through the process outlined in the Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act will enable professionals to provide virtual services more quickly.
Physician	Expedited licensing through the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (for physicians already licensed in a compact state)	<p>Physician must hold a full, unrestricted medical license in a Compact Member State that is available to serve as an State of Principle Licensure (see map for eligible states). See additional requirements on state of principal licensure here.</p> <p>Additional requirements: Physician must have successfully completed educational and training requirements and your license must be in good standing. See full requirements here.</p> <p>After receiving IMLC licenses the physician, they may apply to practice in additional states</p>	Issued within five business days of getting the reciprocal licensing request.	Yes, although applying through the process outlined in the Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act will enable professionals to provide virtual services more quickly.

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		(including Washington) as long as Letter of Qualification is less than 365 days from the date of issue. Information on the process https://imlcc.org/what-is-the-process/ here.		