

PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What professions does the Board license and how do I get licensed?

The Board issues the following license types:

Physician – Unrestricted License
Physician – Graduate Medical Training License
Physician – Institutional License
Physician – Temporary License
Physician – Interim Limited License
Physician – Volunteer License
Physician Assistant
Physician Assistant – Temporary
Physician Assistant – Primary Supervising Physician Written Agreement
Acupuncturist
Acupuncturist – Temporary
Acupuncturist – Physician
Midwife
Practitioner of Oriental Medicine
Respiratory Care Practitioner
Respiratory Care Practitioner – Temporary
Athletic Trainer
Athletic Trainer – Temporary
Extraterritorial License

For more information regarding the above license types and more detailed information related to each license type, please refer to the Board's law and regulations at www.dos.state.pa.us/med.

Applicants will need to submit the appropriate application and supporting documents to the Board for review and evaluation. Unfortunately, we are unable to conduct preliminary reviews/evaluations of your education/experience via email, telephone, etc.

You can determine if you meet the Board's requirements by downloading a copy of the appropriate application and reviewing the licensing criteria. Applications which include the requirements for licensure can be downloaded from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on licensure information and then click on Board forms.

2. How do I change my name and/or address?

Name Change – Please complete and submit a change of name/address form. This form can be downloaded from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on licensure information and then Board forms. You must submit a copy of a legal document verifying your new name. The following are acceptable name change documents:

- Marriage certificate
- Divorce decree which indicates the retaking of a maiden name
- Other legal document which indicates the retaking of a maiden name
- Legal name change – a copy of the court document must be provided

Address Change – Licensees are required to notify the Board within 15 days of their address change. Address changes must be completed in writing and provide the Board with all the necessary identifying information (name, license number and last 4 digits of your social security number) in order for our office to change the address in our records. Please complete and submit an address/name change form. This form can be downloaded from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on licensure information and then Board forms.

You can also change your address online at www.mylicense.state.pa.us. Licensees will need to register by creating a user ID and password to access our system and your records in order to complete an address change.

3. **How do I obtain a medical license in Pennsylvania?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to conduct preliminary reviews/evaluations of your education/experience via email, telephone, etc.

You can determine if you meet the Board's requirements by downloading a copy of the appropriate application and reviewing the licensing criteria. Applications which include the requirements for licensure can be downloaded from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on licensure information and then click on Board forms. If you wish to have an application mailed to you, please contact the Board via email at st-medicine@state.pa.us. You can view the Board's law and regulations on our website, also.

4. **How do I reactivate my expired/inactive license?**

Please contact the Board office at 717-783-1400 or 717-787-2381 or via email at st-medicine@state.pa.us to request a reactivation application packet. You will need to provide your full name, license number, last four digits of your social security number, date of birth and current mailing address. A reactivation application will be mailed to you. If you choose to reactivate your license to active status, you would be required to meet the Board's continuing education requirements prior to applying for a reactivation application. You can obtain information regarding the CME requirements on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med.

5. **What's the difference between Inactive, Expired, Active Retired or Voluntary Surrender status?**

The following are options that you may choose in lieu of keeping your license active:

- **Inactive** – A licensee who will not be engaging in any aspect of the practice of medicine. If you choose this option, you may ask the Board to place your license inactive by submitting a letter and returning the current license. **PHYSICIANS ONLY:** If your license is on an inactive status, you will not need to maintain malpractice insurance, meet continuing education requirements, or pay the biennial license renewal fee. **PLEASE NOTE: You may not write prescriptions for yourself or family.** When ready to reactivate the license, you must contact the Board for a reactivation form.
- **Expired** – A licensee who has not renewed their license during the renewal period will automatically be placed on expired status at the end of the renewal period. If your license is on expired status, you will **NOT** need to maintain professional liability insurance, meet continuing education requirements, or pay the biennial license renewal fee. **PLEASE NOTE: You may NOT practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on an expired license.** When ready to reactivate the license, you must contact the Board for a reactivation form.
- **Active Retired (Physicians Only)** – A physician who wishes to continue to write prescriptions for themselves or immediate family only (spouse, children, parents, siblings who live with you). If you choose this option, you must submit a letter to the Board and return the active license. If your physician and surgeon license is on an active retired status, you are excused from maintaining malpractice insurance and meeting continuing education requirements. **You will, however, be required to pay the biennial renewal fee.**
- **Voluntary Surrender** – A licensee who wishes to voluntarily surrender property rights to their license to practice the profession in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. An application to voluntarily surrender your license must be completed and submitted to our office (www.dos.state.pa.us/med). If it is determined that the applicant does not have any pending disciplinary actions against their license in the Commonwealth of PA or any other licensing jurisdiction, we will process the request and surrender the license as a **Voluntary Surrender – Non Disciplinary**. However, if it is found that there is pending disciplinary action against their license in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any

other licensing jurisdiction, we will process the request and surrender the license as a **Voluntary Surrender – Disciplinary**, which is reportable to the National Practitioner Data Bank and Federation of State Medical Boards.

If you choose to keep your license active, you will be required to maintain malpractice insurance (if you are practicing by providing health care services to patients), meet the current continuing education requirements, and continue to pay the biennial renewal fee. If you wish to continue with this status, you do not need to contact the Board.

If you choose to place the license on inactive or active retired status, and then wish to reactivate your license to active status, you will be required to maintain malpractice insurance (if you are practicing by providing health care services to patients), meet the current continuing education requirements, and pay the biennial renewal fee. You can obtain information regarding the CME requirements on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. **PLEASE NOTE:** If you have NOT been licensed to practice in Pennsylvania (another state or employed by the federal government) for more than four years, your application will require the full Board's review and approval to determine eligibility for licensure. This may delay the reactivation of your license until this review is completed.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Board office at 717-783-1400 or 717-783-2381.

6. How do I place my license on Inactive status?

To place your license inactive, submit a written request to the Board to place your license on inactive status. Please include your full name, license number, last four digits of your social security number and date of birth on all correspondence. You will be required to return your current wall and wallet license.

While on an inactive status, you do not need to maintain professional liability insurance, meet continuing education requirements, or pay the biennial license renewal fee. Of course, under inactive status, **you may not write prescriptions; not even for yourself or family.**

7. How can I get a certification/verification of my license (Letter of Good Standing)?

To obtain a verification of licensure/letter of good standing, please complete the Request for Verification/Certification of Licensure form and submit it along with the appropriate fee (a \$15 check/money order). Check/money order should be made payable to the Commonwealth of PA. Send the completed form and fee to State Board of Medicine, P.O. Box 2649, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649. You can download this form from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med Click on Licensure Information and then click on Board Forms.

To expedite processing, please include a self-addressed, postage paid envelope which indicates where the verification is to be sent.

8. How do I get a copy of my license?

You may obtain a duplicate copy of your license on our website at www.mylicense.state.pa.us. Click on the link duplicate licenses/address changes/application status. First time users will be required to register and create a user ID and password.

You may also request a duplicate copy of your license via mail by submitting a request in writing to the Board which includes your full name, license number and last four digits social security number along with the appropriate fee (a \$5 check/money order). Check/money order should be made payable to the Commonwealth of PA. Send the completed form and fee to State Board of Medicine, P.O. Box 2649, Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649.

9. **How can I get a copy of an application?**

Applications can be downloaded from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med Click on Licensure information and then Board forms.

Many downloadable forms on the Department of State website are available in PDF format only and are best viewed with Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you would like to view and/or print these forms and you do not have the most recent copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed or as an add-on to your browser, Adobe provides the viewer at no cost. This viewer provides the capability to view and print the document.



You will need to have Adobe Acrobat software on your computer in order to view and download applications. This software is free and available Adobe website using the link below:
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

10. **How can I check the status of my application?**

You may check on the status of your application on our website at www.mylicense.state.pa.us. Click on the link [duplicate licenses/address changes/application status](#). First time users will be required to register and create a user ID and password. You will need to have your registration code available at the time you register. This registration code is printed on your license.

11. **What are the most frequent problems/discrepancies which cause a delay in processing applications?**

The most common mistakes noted with applications are listed below:

- **Fee:** No fee submitted, incorrect fee amount, check not signed, check not made payable to "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."
- **Application:** Application not signed, missing pages or is incomplete.
- **Primary Source Documents:** Original documents not submitted directly from the primary source (transcript(s), diploma, verification of education form, letter(s) of good standing from other state(s) where the applicant has ever been licensed, post graduate training verification form(s), exam scores, ECFMG certification, etc.). Board will not accept these documents unless they are sent to our office directly from the primary source. Also, all foreign language documents must be translated by an approved translation agency/professor and submitted to our office. We will not translate foreign language documents.
- **Missing Documents:** If an applicant fails to answer or answers "yes" to one of the legal questions on the application, they are required to provide copies of the necessary documents as listed in the question(s). Also, if answering yes to licensed in other states, applicant does not indicate which states.
- **Name Change:** Official documents required to support name change not submitted.
- **Curriculum Vitae:** CV is missing, is not in chronological order by month/year or contains gaps of time not accounted for. All time from graduation from school to present must be documented (including childrearing, research, unemployment, etc.).
- **Discrepancies:** Information provided by the applicant on the application, CV, etc., does not match the information provided by the primary source (graduate medical training dates do not match, training levels not listed, ACGME approved specialty not listed, etc.).
- **NPDB/HIPDB Reports:** Both original reports provided to the applicant during self-query must be submitted to our office. The original copies of "**both**" reports must be sent to our office. We will not accept copies.
- **FCVS Credentialing Reports:** All documents must be verified as original source and not received from applicant. Also, additional documents are required by the Board which FCVS does not compile and submit for the applicant including:

- Curriculum Vitae
- Moral Character References
- Letter of Good Standing from all other states where licensed
- National Practitioner Data Bank Report
- Supporting legal/court documents regarding a Yes answer to questions 2-9 on the Application
- Board holds the right to request any additional documents needed to complete an accurate evaluation and review of the application

12. How do I verify a license of a medical professional?

Information regarding a practitioner's license can be verified through the following website: www.licensepa.state.pa.us.

13. When do the Medical Board licenses expire/renew?

All the Medical Board's licenses are issued on a biennial basis and renew at the same time. These licenses expire on December 31st of every even numbered year. Renewal notices are sent to all "active and active-retired" status licenses at the address information on file with the Board approximately 90 days prior to the expiration date.

It is important that current address information is on file with the Board to ensure that you receive this renewal information, when mailed. If you need to update your address information, please complete and submit a change of name/address form. This form can be downloaded from the website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on licensure information and then Board forms.

You can also change your address online at www.mylicense.state.pa.us. Licensees will need to register by creating a user ID and password to access our system and your records in order to complete an address change. You will need to have your registration code available at the time you register. This registration code is printed on your license.

14. What is a volunteer medical license (MD)?

As an active, active-retired or inactive physician you may wish to volunteer your services at approved charitable health clinics. Physicians who wish to volunteer their time in such clinics may obtain a volunteer license. **There is no charge for the volunteer license, you are excused from professional liability insurance requirements (for the volunteer license only) and you may prescribe for yourself and your family. You are required to meet the continuing medical education requirements.**

You can obtain additional information regarding the volunteer license requirements and download an application from our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med.

15. What are the continuing medical education requirements (Physician and Surgeons, Volunteer Physicians, Athletic Trainers and Respiratory Care Practitioners)?

Detailed information regarding the State Board of Medicine continuing education requirements for Physician and Surgeons, Volunteer Physicians, Athletic Trainers and Respiratory Care Practitioners are outlined on the Board's web site and in the regulations through various links at www.dos.state.pa.us/med.

16. Who is eligible for a continuing medical education exemption?

- A physician, athletic trainer or respiratory care practitioner applying for licensure in this Commonwealth for the first time shall be exempt from the continuing medical education requirement for the biennial renewal period in which initial licensure is acquired.
- A physician holding a graduate training license within the renewal cycle shall be exempt from the continuing medical education requirement.

- A licensee who holds an active/retired license, who provides care only to immediate family members, shall be exempt for the continuing medical education requirement
- A licensee who is on inactive status shall be exempt from the continuing medical education requirement.
 - A licensee who is seeking to reinstate an inactive or expired license shall show proof of compliance with the continuing education requirement for the preceding renewal period.

17. Who is eligible for a waiver of the continuing medical education requirements?

- The Board may grant a hardship waiver of all or a part of the continuing medical education requirement in cases of serious illness, military service or other good cause provided that the public's safety and welfare will not be jeopardized by the granting of the waiver
- A request for waiver must be made in writing, with appropriate supporting medical/military/etc. documentation, and include a description of circumstances sufficient to show why compliance is impossible.
- Waiver requests will be evaluated by the Board on a case-by-case basis. The Board will send written notification of its approval or denial of a waiver request.

18. How do I file a complaint?

You can obtain information regarding the Department of State complaint process on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us Click on Professional Licensure and then click on Complaints. You can review facts you should know when submitting a complaint, the complaint process and how complaints are handled. You can also file a complaint online through this website or download a paper copy of the form to complete and submit through the mail. The Professional Compliance Office (Complaints) can be reached at 800-822-2113.

19. Does the Board accept FCVS credentials verification from the Federation of State Medical Boards?

Yes, the PA State Board of Medicine accepts the Federation of State Medical Boards, (FCVS) Federation Credentials Verification Service for the purpose of verification of academic and professional credentials towards the process of obtaining licensure in Pennsylvania.

The Federation's FCVS documents which are verified to the Board include:

- Verification of Medical Education
- Verification of Post Graduate Medical Training
- Verification of Exam Scores (USMLE, FLEX, NBME, LMCC and State)
- Verification of ECFMG Certification
- Verification of Fifth Pathway
- Verification of American Specialty Board Certification
- Verification of Legal Name Change Documents

However, please note that in addition to the documents that are listed above as being provided utilizing the FCVS method, the PA State Board of Medicine also requires that the applicant provide the Board directly with the following documents which are not included as part of the Federation's verification report:

- Curriculum Vitae
- Moral Character References
- Letter of Good Standing from all other states where you have been licensed
- National Practitioner Data Bank Report
- Supporting Legal/Court Documents Regarding a Yes Answer to Questions 2-9 on the Application
- Board holds the right to request any additional documents needed to complete an accurate evaluation and review of the application

PLEASE NOTE: The PA Board has the responsibility to make sure that the applicant meets the licensure requirements outlined in the Board's law and regulations. If the information that we receive from the

Federation does not indicate that the Federation received original or primary source verification and/or the Federation was unable to officially document any part of the licensure requirements, the PA Board will not be able to accept that portion of the FCVS document.

20. How can I view disciplinary information on licensees?

Information on disciplined physicians can be found at www.dos.state.pa.us/med Click on consumer information and then disciplinary actions.

21. What is MCARE and what are the reporting requirements?

On March 20, 2002, Governor Schweiker signed into law the Medical Care Availability and Reduction of Error Act. The new law obligates medical doctors to complete 100 hours of continuing medical education for each biennial renewal period.

The law creates, among other requirements, a mandatory self-reporting obligation on physicians. Physicians are obligated to self-report to the Board within 60 days of the occurrence of any of the following: receipt of service of a civil professional liability complaint, notice of a disciplinary action by another jurisdiction, any controlled substance conviction, and any arrests for criminal offenses such as homicide, assault, sexual offenses, and controlled substance violations.

Reports must be sent to the following address and must include the following information and documents:

**STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE
ATTN: MCARE REPORTS
P.O. BOX 2649
HARRISBURG, PA 17105-2649**

- 1. The court where the case was filed**
- 2. Docket number**
- 3. The date the civil complaint was served on the physician**
- 4. A description of the allegations**
- 5. A complete copy of the civil complaint (DO NOT SUBMIT WRIT OF SUMMONS) or court documents relating to disciplinary action, conviction or arrest.**

Failure to report may result in disciplinary action against the physician's license. Physicians, other health care workers, and medical facilities also have responsibilities to report any event involving the clinical care of a patient that results in an unanticipated death or patient injury.

More information and a copy of the Act can be found on the Board's website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. You can also view information on the Department of Insurance website at: www.mcare.state.pa.us

22. How do I obtain copies of my medical records from my doctor and is there a fee?

Information regarding medical records (charging for copies, retention, etc.) can be found in the Board's law and regulations on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med

A physician is required to comply with a patient's request for a copy of their medical record within a reasonable period of time. It is considered unprofessional conduct for failure to make available to the patient or another designated health care practitioner the medical record or a copy of the medical records. A reasonable fee may be charged for making available copies, forms or reports. The fee schedule for maximum charges may be found at www.health.state.pa.us. Prior payment for professional services may not be required as a condition for making the copies available. A physician may withhold information, if in his professional judgment, the release of the information would adversely affect the patient's health.

23. How long does a doctor have to maintain my medical records?

Information regarding medical records (charging for copies, retention, etc.) can be found in the Board's law and regulations on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med

A patient's medical record shall be retained by a physician for at least 7 years from the date of the last medical service for which a medical record entry is required. The medical record for a minor patient shall be retained until 1 year after the minor patient reaches majority, even if this means that the physician retains the record for a period of more than 7 years.

24. Where can I obtain information regarding hospitals/health care facilities?

The information you are requesting is available through the Department of Health, Bureau of Facility Licensure and Certification at 717-787-8015 or on their website at www.health.state.pa.us.

25. Does Pennsylvania license radiology technicians?

Pennsylvania does not license radiology technicians. To work in a physician's office the personnel must either be certified by ARRT or pass the examination administered by the State Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine. Regulations regarding personnel performing radiological duties can be found on our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. Click on Rules and Regulations, Chapter 18, Subchapter E.

26. How do I obtain a graduate medical training application?

The application for a graduate training license must be obtained from the Medical Staff Office of the Hospital where you will be training. **Please contact the hospital directly to request an application.**

27. Do I need to maintain professional liability insurance?

If you hold an active physician and surgeon (MD) or certified nurse midwife (CNM) license and are actively practicing medicine in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you are required to maintain professional liability insurance. Exemptions to this requirement can be found at § 711(j) of the MCARE Act (Act 13 of 2002) or on the MCARE website at www.mcare.state.pa.us.

28. What is the Board's mailing address, telephone number and hours of operation?

The Board's office hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Address and contact information:

Mailing Address

State Board of Medicine
PO Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649

Courier Address

State Board of Medicine
2601 North Third Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Telephone: 717-783-1400 or 717-787-2381

Fax: 717-787-7769

Email: st-medicine@state.pa.us

29. When does the State Board of Medicine meet?

The State Board of Medicine meets once a month. For additional information regarding Board members and/or meeting dates, please visit our website at www.dos.state.pa.us/med.

30. **How do I get a copy of the Medical Board's Agenda?**

A copy of the Medical Board's Agenda Table of Contents is available on our web site at www.dos.state.pa.us/med. The Table of Contents is public information and, therefore, is the only portion of the agenda that will be provided. In order to view this information from the web site, click on **Consumer Information**, then **Meeting Dates** and then **Current Meeting Agenda**.

PLEASE NOTE: Copies of previously posted agendas **ARE NOT** available and cannot be viewed. Only the current or most recent Board meeting agenda information will be accessible.