



NLAC Update: APRIL 2020

COVID-19: Call to Action

The shortages in PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) continue to be nurses' top concern during this health emergency. We need our government to do all they can to ensure adequate supplies for the health care workforce. **Texas nurses need to exercise their voice of 400,000 and let our legislators know our situation is critical and health care workers need action NOW!** The response must be constant and unrelenting until an adequate supply is assured. Use your voice here.



[Texas Needs More PPE Supplies!](#)

NLAC held a special virtual meeting in March to share nursing's concerns and immediate issues encountered while dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. It was an informative meeting, and NLAC will continue to hold virtual updates throughout the crisis.

During NLAC's COVID-19 meeting, several resources were discussed. They are below, along with a link to TNA's COVID-19 resource page. Please send any resources you'd like to share to Cathy White, cwhite@texasnurses.org.

- [TNA COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [AORN COVID-19 Toolkit](#)
- [CDC COVID-19](#)
- [Gov. Abbott waiver of nursing regulations \(BON site\)](#)

During this emergency, we are seeing changes in policy from the top down (CMS rule changes, executive orders from the President and Governor, changes in telehealth rules and payment) as well as from the bottom up (individual health care organizations, executive orders from mayors and county judges). *What are we learning from these policy changes? Which should continue beyond this pandemic? What new policies should nursing advance? How is the current situation changing your priorities for the next session?*



The 2020 spring NLAC meeting, scheduled for April 28, has been canceled due to the COVID-19 crisis. Once operations return to normal, rescheduling this meeting will be explored.

These are frightening and uncertain times. Please be sure to take care of yourselves, your nursing peers and your loved ones. We will get through this together! Be safe and look for the light at the end of this very dark, very scary tunnel.

Thank you for your work!



**** Follow us on Twitter at @TXNursesLege, the twitter handle for Nursewatch.**

Capitol Brief Update

by Kevin C. Stewart, II

First and foremost, I want to thank all of the nurses out there who are working on the frontlines during this unprecedented crisis. I have been truly amazed by the way the nursing community has responded, and I hope that you all feel the gratitude that your friends, family, and patients owe you. This disaster has made it abundantly clear who the true heroes are.

While association staff are not serving on the front lines, we are doing everything in our power to make your lives easier. We've been working around the clock with both the Board of Nursing and the Office of the Governor to suspend laws and rules that are an impediment to your practice.

The biggest change to date is the creation of a six-month grace period for licensure renewals. Beginning on March 23rd, nurses will have a grace period until September 30th to renew a license without any late fees or the need to submit evidence of continuing education. This waiver also applies to renewals of prescriptive authority. Additionally, the governor has waived reactivation fees, CE requirements, and refresher course requirements for nurses returning from Inactive or Retired Status.

For nurses who are working towards full licensure, the state is now allowing six-month extensions of temporary permits for graduate nurses and graduate vocational nurses who are waiting to take the licensure exam. Further, nurses who are in their last year of a vocational or professional nursing education program are now able to exceed the 50% limit on simulated clinical learning experiences.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) have also received leniency in a few areas. Most importantly, APRNs are not required to have written agreements while practicing in a disaster relief setting. However, APRNs must still have a verbal agreement for delegation from a physician licensed in Texas. The governor has also waived the prohibition on providing refills for pain management prescriptions through telemedicine. On the federal level, CRNAs no longer need to have physician supervision when caring for Medicare patients, and NPs and CNSs no longer need a physician's signature on Durable Medical Equipment orders through Medicaid.

Needless to say, a lot has changed, and we're very happy with the responsiveness of both the Governor and the Board of Nursing. Nevertheless, more changes are in the works. If there is something in particular that would help you as you provide care during the pandemic, I encourage you to reach out to your professional association so that we can address those needs promptly.

Again, on behalf of all Texans, thank you for all that you do, and please stay safe and healthy.



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Texas Register: Rules and Regulations

March 20, 2020

Board of Nursing

217.2, Licensure by Examination for Graduates of Nursing Education Programs Within the United States, its Territories, or Possessions (PROPOSED) This proposal, as it relates to new applicants, replaces “FBI fingerprint cards provided by the Board” with simply “fingerprints.” This is due to a change in how the BON conducts background checks. The proposal also removes specific language related to military programs because military programs are currently reviewed and approved by the Board in the same manner as all other nursing programs.

217.3, Temporary Authorization to Practice/Temporary Permit (PROPOSED) This proposal would require applicants to submit fingerprints and complete the jurisprudence exam prior to receiving a temporary authorization to practice. Additionally, this proposal would allow nurses whose licenses have been suspended, revoked, or surrendered through board action to renew their temporary permits to practice. This intent of this latter change is to give nurses additional time to complete board stipulations without a disruption in their ability to practice.

217.4, Requirements for Initial Licensure by Examination for Nurses Who Graduate from Nursing Education Programs Outside of United States' Jurisdiction (PROPOSED) Currently, applicants who received their degree from a school outside of the United States must have their coursework evaluated by one of three third-party Credential Evaluation Services (CESs). This proposal removes the language specifying which CESs applicants may use and replaces it with standards that a CES must meet.

217.5, Temporary License and Endorsement (PROPOSED) This proposal would make the same changes that the proposed 217.4 would make, but it applies to applicants from other states or Canada. Also, currently, individuals seeking a license through

endorsement, who have not taken the NCLEX or practiced nursing within the prior four years, must complete a jurisprudence prep course or workshop, in addition to the required refresher course, orientation, or program of study. This proposal would eliminate the requirement for a prep course or workshop, as the content is often redundant given the requirement to do a refresher course.

217.6, Failure to Renew License (PROPOSED) This proposal aligns this rule, as it relates to nurses seeking renewal who have not practiced in the prior four years, with proposed 217.5 by eliminating the need for a jurisprudence prep course or workshop.

217.8, Duplicate or Substitute Credentials (PROPOSED) This proposal would repeal this rule entirely, as it is now obsolete.

217.9, Inactive and Retired Status (PROPOSED) This proposal would align this rule with 217.5 and 217.6, eliminating the need for a jurisprudence prep course or workshop.

222.3, Renewal of Prescriptive Authority (PROPOSED) This proposal aligns this rule with a continuing education rule adopted by the board in November. It removes the requirement for an additional three hours related to prescribing controlled substances each biennium.

Remember ...

- You can find the [Texas Register](#) on the Texas [Secretary of State](#) website, where ALL the rule proposals and adoptions from the Texas BON and other state regulatory agencies are updated weekly on Fridays and published. *Nursewatch* will print some of the more pertinent updates to nursing rules and regulations but you can delve deeper into current and past issues of the Texas Register at your leisure on the S.O.S. website.

Upcoming Events

- **CANCELED** - TNA 2020 Policy Summit and House of Delegates: Building Nursing Influence Through Policy Capacity - June 5-6, 2020, Houston. Get refund information [here](#).

*If your NLAC organization/association is having an open event or you know of a relevant activity/event, please send the information to TNA Government Affairs Coordinator [Cathy White](#) for inclusion in upcoming issues of *Nursewatch*.*



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