



April 2, 2020

Waiver of Temporary Permit Rule for Respiratory Therapists During Coronavirus Emergency

Summary:

Respiratory therapy law and regulations allow students who expect to graduate from a respiratory care educational program within 30 days to apply to the State Board of Medicine for a temporary permit to practice.

A temporary permit allows a practitioner to work as a respiratory therapist in the commonwealth for one year. During that time, the temporary permit holder must take the entry-level examination given by the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) to earn the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) credential. Upon earning the CRT credential, the temporary permit holder is eligible to receive a full license. The temporary permit expires one year from the date of issuance or immediately upon the holder failing the NBRC exam – whichever comes first.

Because the temporary permit can only be granted when the student is within 30 days of graduation, most students take the exam for a CRT credential and apply for a full license instead. Some of the students who are about to graduate between now and the end of May have already applied for full licensure, which cannot be granted without an exam. Currently, however, the credentialing exam testing sites are closed due to the COVID-19 emergency. This situation leaves these students who are about to graduate unable to practice until the testing centers reopen and they can take their exam.

The Department of State requested, and Governor Wolf granted, a temporary waiver of the requirement that applicants for a temporary respiratory therapist permit be within 30 days of their anticipated graduation date. Instead, for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, students in respiratory care education programs who wish to apply for a temporary permit must be within 90 days of their anticipated graduation date. Those impending graduates who already applied for a full license, but cannot take their exam because of the closure of test centers, may now apply for a temporary permit.

Currently, the required “Verification of Education” forms prepared by program directors of respiratory therapy schools are paper submissions that must be mailed to the department’s Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA). Because mailing increases the time it takes BPOA to receive and process these forms, the department will now allow electronic submission of the forms through a designated email address.

For all licensing-related inquiries, please use the email addresses found here: [Board](#)

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