



April 13, 2020

## **Pennsylvania Expands Clinical Clerk Services During COVID-19 Emergency**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has received requests from multiple health systems to deploy medical students in the hospital systems outside of the students' standard course electives. DHS is setting up learning and support call centers to assist long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities and personal care homes during the COVID-19 emergency. The medical students will gather general information and provide answers to basic questions concerning COVID-19, other general questions about infectious disease control and, occasionally, patient-specific questions. These medical students will be physically located in their assigned hospital while obtaining information from and providing patient-specific answers to individuals who are not located in the hospital. The medical students will have direct and immediate supervision by MDs and DOs while performing this task.

The State Medical and Osteopathic Boards only regulate medical students to the extent that they perform as "clinical clerks," a term that is defined in both the Medical Practice Act and the Osteopathic Medical Practice Act. Because the definitions vary slightly between the Boards, **only** the Medical Board requires a waiver of statutory language to allow these medical students to provide services to individuals who are not located within the hospital where the medical student is assigned. **The Department requested and received a waiver from the Governor of the statute that limits services provided by clinical clerks to patients in hospital settings. For the duration of this emergency, clinical clerks are not limited to providing services to patients in hospitals.**

[The existing waiver relating to telemedicine](#) would apply to clinical clerks as they fall under the Medical Board.

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