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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

March 20, 2020

Certain regulations suspended for Nurse-Midwives

Governor Wolf granted the Department of State's request to allow the suspension of certain regulations concerning Certified Nurse Midwives.

The public-health situation due to COVID-19 has created an ever-increasing demand for qualified health care professionals to assist on many fronts. This includes **Nurse-Midwives, licensed by the State Board of Medicine**.

The Department of State's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs identified several regulations that could limit or delay the number of available practitioners to provide much-needed assistance. Under a proposal from BPOA and the state Board of Medicine:

- The Governor approved temporary suspension of the requirement that a **collaborative agreement** be filed with the State Board of Medicine prior to engaging in the practice of midwifery. Instead, during this declared emergency, **after the collaborative agreement is agreed upon, Certified Nurse-Midwives may immediately begin to engage in the practice of midwifery**.
  The agreement must still be filed with the Board as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days following the end of the COVID-19 emergency. Delivery of the agreement to the Board and processing of the agreement are not needed prior to engaging in midwifery.
  This waiver also applies to Certified Nurse-Midwives who previously filed a collaborative agreement with the Board that is still being processed. Any such Certified Nurse-Midwives may begin to engage in midwifery immediately; they do not need to wait for completion of processing.

- For Certified Nurse-Midwives, the Governor approved a temporary suspension of the requirements to notify the Board of **changes to a collaborative agreement**. Certified Nurse-Midwives must still notify the Board of any changes as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days following the end of the COVID-19 emergency. Certified Nurse-Midwives may continue to engage in the practice of midwifery even if changes to the collaborative agreement are not provided to the Board within 30 days.
  Certified Nurse-Midwives should not interrupt the practice of midwifery if they are unable to meet the 30-day requirement.

- In order to streamline **reactivations for inactive Certified Nurse-Midwives** who hold an active registered nurse license, the Governor **suspended the re-entry requirements for nurse-midwives**. The Board of Medicine's practice act does not provide for the authority to issue temporary permits to Certified Nurse-Midwives. Therefore, any Certified Nurse-Midwife licenses reactivated to help with the pandemic, will be bear an expiration date of December 31, 2020. Holders of licenses granted through the suspension who wish to seek renewal of their license beyond December 31, 2020, are required to satisfy the standard requirements for licensure renewal.

- For inactive Certified Nurse-Midwives who hold an active registered nurse license, the Governor granted a suspension of the reactivation requirement related to a personal interview conducted by the Board.

- For Certified Nurse-Midwives with Prescriptive Authority, the Governor temporarily suspended continuing education requirements.

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- The Governor granted a temporary suspension of the requirement that Certified Nurse-Midwives with Prescriptive Authority identify the categories of drugs from which the nurse-midwife may prescribe or dispense.
- It is important to note that any waivers granted by the Department do not relieve Nurse-Midwives -- as licensed professionals -- of their responsibility to practice within all other applicable rules and regulations. Nurse-Midwives are also expected to use their professional judgment to assess risk and to ensure patients receive safe care consistent with the values, principles and professional standards embodied in the statutes and regulations that govern the practice of nurse-midwifery.