Governor Abbott Fast-Tracks Licensing For Out-Of-State Medical Professionals

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Governor Greg Abbott today directed the Texas Medical Board (TMB) and the Texas Board of Nursing (TBN) to fast-track the temporary licensing of out-of-state physicians, physician assistants, certain retired physicians, nurses, and other license types to assist in Texas' response to COVID-19. Today's announcement is among the actions Governor Abbott is taking under the State of Disaster declaration.

"By utilizing TMB and TBN's disaster emergency licensure rule, Texas will have an increased supply of health care professionals who will be able to provide necessary in-person and telemedicine services to Texans across the state," said Governor Abbott. "I am grateful to the Texas Medical Board, the Texas Board of Nursing, and medical professionals across the Lone Star State who are willing to provide important care to Texans and ensure that patients have access to the resources they need. These rules play a key role in Texas' continued efforts to support our communities and mitigate the impact of the coronavirus."

"The Texas Medical Board appreciates Governor Greg Abbott's quick action to suspend certain statutes and rules regarding telemedicine in Texas. The TMB also recognizes the need to ease licensure requirements to facilitate increasing the supply of health care providers available to the people of Texas during these unprecedented times. As such, the TMB is utilizing our disaster emergency

licensure rule to help increase patients' access to both in-person and telemedicine care. Finally, the TMB encourages Texas physicians who have been retired for less than two years to consider returning to active status during this difficult time," said TMB President Sherif Z. Zaafran, M.D.

TMB will allow out-of-state physicians to obtain a Texas limited emergency license or hospital-to-hospital credentialing through the time period that encompasses the Governor's Disaster Declaration. Other types of out-of-state health care professionals regulated by TMB may also receive temporary licenses. These rules are pursuant to Title 22, Chapter 172.20 and 172.21 of the Texas Administrative Code. Specific licensing requirements under these rules may be found on the TMB website.

Additionally, TMB is encouraging retired physicians who are Texas residents with licenses that have been placed on official retired status for less than two years to apply for a return to active status. These licensing requirements under Title 22, Chapter 166.3 of the Texas Administrative Code can also be found on the TMB website.

In accordance with Section 418.171 of Texas Government Code, any out-of-state nurse may practice in Texas for the purpose of rendering aid, provided the nurse holds a current license in good standing in their home state. Therefore, any out-of-state nurse with a license in good standing is not required to hold a Texas license in order to practice nursing in a disaster relief effort operation setting. More information can be found on the TBN website.

Office of the Texas Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin Texas 78711
(512) 463-2000