

Pennsylvania Expands Access to Pharmacy Services

Harrisburg, PA — The Wolf administration is removing barriers for pharmacies to provide services for Pennsylvanians in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Governor Wolf has granted a request from the Pennsylvania Department of State to suspend certain pharmacy regulations to enable more flexible and available services during the coronavirus emergency.

The temporary changes include helping pharmacies practice social distancing for staff and allowing for the licensure of out-of-state pharmacies to ship goods into Pennsylvania.

“Temporarily lifting certain requirements and restrictions allows qualified pharmacy professionals to more easily provide essential services,” Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar said. “This measure will help to ensure that Pennsylvanians continue to receive the medications and pharmacy services they need.”

Suspended regulations include:

- Governor Wolf's order will enable remote supervision by telephone or computer, so pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns may provide needed medications to patients without a supervising pharmacist "on the premises."
- For out-of-state pharmacies that wish to ship goods into Pennsylvania, the requirement for nonresident pharmacy registration is temporarily suspended for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, and out-of-state pharmacies may ship into Pennsylvania provided that:
 - the nonresident pharmacy has a business relationship with a Pennsylvania pharmacy,
 - the nonresident pharmacy is licensed in good standing in their home state, and
 - the nonresident pharmacy and Pennsylvania pharmacy with which it has a business relationship have access to common patient files.
- Governor Wolf also granted the suspension of certain licensure requirements to allow expedited temporary licensure to pharmacy practitioners and pharmacies in other states so they can provide goods and services to Pennsylvanians for the duration of the coronavirus emergency.
 - Process during disaster declaration: If an applicant seeking a temporary license has demonstrated they are licensed by and in good standing with their home state, the Department of State's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) may suspend the requirements for letters of good standing, criminal history record checks, National Practitioner Data Bank reports, and any other requirement deemed "administrative" in nature. BPOA also may suspend any continuing-education requirements for applicants seeking a temporary license.

The governor also suspended the regulation that requires a pharmacy to immediately turn in its permit if it closes or ceases operations. Instead, during the COVID-19 emergency, a pharmacy that temporarily closes for more than 24 hours must notify the State Board of Pharmacy and provide a plan for continuity of patient care.

For licensed pharmacists who also have an authorization to administer injectables, the department is temporarily suspending the requirement that the pharmacist hold an active CPR certificate, so long as a pharmacist's CPR certificate was valid on March 17, 2020. Under these circumstances, the CPR certificate will be extended and accepted as valid through December 31, 2020.

Earlier this week, BPOA announced that in-state and out-of-state health care practitioners can [treat patients via telemedicine](#) during the coronavirus emergency.

Additionally, BPOA has [suspended certain regulations regarding nurse licensing](#) in Pennsylvania for the duration of the emergency.

The Department of State is working with the governor's office, the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services to [identify regulations and requirements](#) that can be suspended to give medical providers and facilities the flexibility they need to respond to COVID-19. The Department of State website will be updated regularly as additional information on suspended regulations becomes available.