



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

Bureau of Health Professions Licensure

Board of Registration in Nursing

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September 21, 2016

To: Massachusetts Nursing and Professional Healthcare Organizations

From: Laurie Talarico, MS, RN, CNP Nursing Practice Coordinator

Re: Important Changes to Licensing Process

The Board of Registration in Nursing Is Going Green! Paper Renewal Reminders and Paper Licenses to be Eliminated

Effective with the 2018 Registered Nurse (RN) and the 2019 Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) renewal cycles, license renewal reminders and nursing licenses in paper format will no longer be mailed via the U.S. Postal Service to Massachusetts nurses.

The Board will use email to send updates to nurses who maintain a current email address in the Board's database. Log onto the [Mass Department of Public Health Online Licensing](http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn) site to update email or mailing addresses. Please note that the mailing and email addresses for each license held must be updated individually. For example, those with both a RN license and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) authorization will be required to maintain current addresses for both categories.

After the current renewal cycle, nurses will be expected to initiate renewal of their nursing license without a paper reminder by logging on to <http://onlineservices.hhs.state.ma.us>.

Licensure status can be verified by accessing the Board of Registration in Nursing (Board) "[Check a License](http://www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn)" link that can be accessed at www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn. The link is considered primary source of verification and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at no cost. It is possible to print information from the website or download licensing information into an excel spread sheet. Directions are provided at the site. Verifications are not provided over the phone or in person.

In addition, nurses and employers can automatically receive free, publicly available primary source license and discipline status updates from boards of nursing in multiple jurisdictions after logging into [Nursys e-Notify](#).

Details regarding the Board's process for [Primary Source Verification](#) are available on the Board's website.

Nurses are urged to regularly check the Board's [website](#) for further developments. The Board posts information on its website to alert nurses to licensure requirement revisions or other noteworthy news. In order to keep current, the Board recommends that all nurses subscribe to the Board's RSS feed icon  at www.mass.gov/dph/boards/rn to be automatically notified via email when the Board posts a "news and updates" item. If you have not done so, take a moment to review the [Board's annual Newsletter](#).

RN license and APRN authorization renewals occur on the RN's birthday in even-numbered years. LPN license renewals occur on the LPN's birthday in odd-numbered years. Licenses revert to an "Expired" status automatically should the licensee fail to renew by 11:59 pm on the license expiration date. Once the renewal is complete, the renewed license status will immediately appear on the Board's [license verification site](#).

Practice with an expired license is illegal and grounds for Board discipline. A civil administrative penalty for unlicensed practice of up to \$2,500 and/or six months of imprisonment may be imposed [ref: MGL c.112, §65A].

During the renewal process, all nurses attest under penalties of perjury to compliance with:

- State tax and child support laws
- Mandatory reporting laws
- All Board laws and regulations including continuing education requirements
- Prescriber training requirements pursuant to MGL c. 94C, s. 18(e)

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES
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APRNs (Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Clinical Nurse Specialists) are required to have current certification from a Board approved certifying organization.

An APRN is not authorized to practice without current certification [ref: 244 CMR 9.04(4) and 244 CMR 4.05]. Should APRN certification lapse for any reason, the APRN must inform the Board by completing a [Request to remove APRN authorization](#) and cease APRN practice until such time that certification becomes current. The Board does not have a "grace period".

When renewing a RN license, APRNs will renew their Board authorization to practice as an APRN at the same time. If, for any reason, an APRN does not intend to renew their APRN authorization, he or she must complete a [Request to remove APRN authorization](#), allowing time for processing, prior to renewing to avoid paying the APRN renewal fee. Be advised that fees are non-refundable.

When expired, should an APRN successfully complete the certification process, he or she may complete a [Request to reinstate APRN authorization](#). Upon receipt of the form, the Board verifies the certification as current, updates the Board's license verification site and the APRN may return to practice.

The Board advises APRNs to review the information on the current renewal reminder carefully. During the renewal process, APRNs are requested to provide specific certification information, such as:

- Name of Board approved certifying organization (ANCC, AANP, NCC, PNCB, AACN, AMCB, NBCRNA)
- Certification number (as it appears on your certification)
- Certification expiration date (mm/dd/year)

It is an APRN professional responsibility to meet the initial and continued certification requirements of the Board approved certifying organization. APRNs should contact their certifying organization for additional certification information.

The APRN with prescriptive authority, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 94C, Section 18(e), in addition to acquiring and maintaining the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to practice in accordance with accepted standards of care for pain management, are required to complete [appropriate education](#) in the following concepts prior to initial Board authorization to practice in the advanced role, and subsequently, during each renewal period:

1. effective pain management;
2. the risks of abuse and addiction associated with opioid medication;
3. identification of patients at risk for substance use disorders;
4. counseling patients about the side effects, addictive nature and proper storage and disposal of prescription medications;
5. appropriate prescription quantities for prescription medications that have an increased risk of abuse; and
6. opioid antagonists, overdose prevention treatments and instances in which a patient may be advised on both the use of and ways to access opioid antagonists and overdose prevention treatments.

Please note that MGL 94C, Section 18(e) does not specify a minimum number of contact hours to comply with this education requirement. APRNs may choose any continuing education offering consistent with the Board requirements at [244 CMR 5.00: Continuing Education](#) and [Advisory Ruling 0901: Management of Pain](#).

By signing the MCSR form and by your signature on your license renewal form, you attest under penalties of perjury that you have complied with state tax and child support laws, mandatory reporting laws, and all Board laws and regulations, including continuing education requirements.