

Executive Order 20-10 – COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 3/27/2020

On 3/27/2020, Pete Ricketts, Governor of the State of Nebraska, signed an Executive Order which suspends several statutes and their implementing regulations from the Uniform Credentialing Act relating to specific health care providers, which are impairing the ability to access needed health care practitioners in Nebraska.

Q: Where can I find Governor Ricketts' Executive Order 20-10?

A: Governor Ricketts' website is governor.nebraska.gov. All executive orders can be found [here](#).

Q: What is an executive order?

A: An executive order is a rule or order issued by the Governor to a branch of state government that also has the force of law.

Q: How long does an executive order last?

A: Executive Order 20-10 applies while the declared public health emergency remains in effect and for 30 days after the lifting of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Q: When does Executive Order 20-10 become effective?


A: Executive Order 20-10 is effective immediately upon the signature of the Governor. The Governor signed the order on 3/27/2020.

Q: What professions does Executive Order 20-10 apply to?

A: The following professions are listed in Executive Order 20-10:

- Advanced practice nursing
- Emergency medical services
- Medicine and surgery
- Mental health practice
- Nursing
- Osteopathic medicine and surgery
- Perfusion
- Pharmacy
- Psychology
- Respiratory care
- Surgical assisting





Q: Does Executive Order 20-10 allow individuals in these professions to use telehealth to practice in Nebraska?

A: Yes, individuals in the professions listed in Executive Order 20-10 may use telehealth to practice in Nebraska. This includes Nebraska licensees located in Nebraska, Nebraska licensees located in other states, and individuals who are actively licensed in a U.S. state or territory other than Nebraska, who are being allowed to practice in Nebraska without a Nebraska license.

Q: How does Executive Order 20-10 affect initial licensure?

A: The executive order affects initial licensure in the following three (3) areas:

1. Reciprocity, Endorsement: Executive Order 20-10 temporarily allows individuals who are actively licensed in a U.S. state or territory other than Nebraska to practice in Nebraska without needing a Nebraska license. The license in the other state must be active, in good standing and free from disciplinary action. This only applies to people licensed to engage in the practice of:
 - **Advanced Practice Nursing**
 - Certified nurse midwives (CNM)
 - Nurse practitioners (NP)
 - Clinical nurse specialists (CNS)
 - Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA)
 - **Emergency Medical Services**
 - Emergency medical responders (EMR)
 - Emergency medical technicians (EMT)
 - Advanced emergency medical technicians (AEMT)
 - Paramedics
 - **Medicine and Surgery**
 - Physicians (MD)
 - Physician assistants (PA)
 - Acupuncturists
 - **Mental Health Practice**
 - Licensed independent mental health practitioners (LIMHP)
 - Licensed mental health practitioners (LMHP)
 - Provisional licensed mental health practitioners (PLMHP)
 - Social Workers
 - **Nursing**
 - Registered nurses (RN)
 - Licensed practical nurses (LPN)
 - **Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery**
 - Osteopathic physicians and surgeons (DO)
 - **Perfusion**
 - Perfusionists
 - **Pharmacy**
 - Pharmacists
 - Pharmacist interns
 - Pharmacy technicians
 - **Psychology**
 - Psychologists
 - Provisional licensed psychologists (PLP)

- **Respiratory Care**
 - Respiratory care practitioners
- **Surgical Assisting**
 - Surgical first assistants

2. Initial License Fee: Executive Order 20-10 allows applications for initial licenses to be processed electronically (e-mail or fax) and issued without receipt of the initial license fee. The fee is still due, but will not delay the issuance of the license. This applies only to the following professions:

- Physicians (MD and DO)
- Nurses (CNM, NP, CNS, CRNA, RN, and LPN)
- Emergency medical services (EMR, EMT, AEMT, and paramedics)
- Pharmacists, pharmacist interns, and pharmacy technicians

3. Criminal History Record Information Check by Fingerprint: Executive Order 20-10 allows registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, emergency medical technicians, emergency care providers licensed under the Emergency Medical Services Practice Act, or any profession that is authorized to prescribe controlled substances, to be issued an initial license before receiving the results of a national criminal history record information check by fingerprint. The applicant must:

- a. Submit an application and meet all other requirements of initial licensure,
- b. Submit fingerprints to the Nebraska State Patrol (NSP); and
- c. Pass Department-conducted checks of the Nebraska Data Exchange Network (NDEN).

Q: How does Executive Order 20-10 affect healthcare providers who hold an inactive or expired Nebraska license?

A: Executive Order 20-10 allows expired and inactive Nebraska license-holders to temporarily reinstate their expired or inactive licenses to active status without having to meet the continuing competency requirements for the time that the Executive Order is effective. The expired or inactive license-holder must submit a completed reinstatement application to the Department. This reinstatement process is only effective throughout the duration of Executive Order 20-10.

Q: How does Executive Order 20-10 affect renewals?

A: Licensees will still need to submit a renewal before the expiration date of their license. However, Executive Order 20-10 defers the continuing education requirements for the renewals that occur during the emergency and defers paying the renewal fees for the following practice areas:

- **Advanced Practice Nursing**
 - Certified nurse midwives (CNM)
 - Nurse practitioners (NP)
 - Clinical nurse specialists (CNS)
 - Certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA)
- **Emergency Medical Services**
 - Emergency medical responders (EMR)
 - Emergency medical technicians (EMT)
 - Advanced emergency medical technicians (AEMT)
 - Paramedics



- **Medicine and Surgery**
 - Physicians (MD)
 - Physician assistants (PA)
 - Acupuncturists
- **Mental Health Practice**
 - Licensed independent mental health practitioners (LIMHP)
 - Licensed mental health practitioners (LMHP)
 - Provisional licensed mental health practitioners (PLMHP)
 - Social Workers
- **Nursing**
 - Registered nurses (RN)
 - Licensed practical nurses (LPN)
- **Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery**
 - Osteopathic physicians and surgeons (DO)
- **Perfusion**
 - Perfusionists
- **Pharmacy**
 - Pharmacists
 - Pharmacist interns
 - Pharmacy technicians
- **Psychology**
 - Psychologists
 - Provisional licensed psychologists (PLP)
- **Respiratory Care**
 - Respiratory care practitioners
- **Surgical Assisting**
 - Surgical first assistants

Q: When will continuing education and renewal fees be due?

A: Licenses due to be renewed during the declared emergency will be extended until 30 days after Executive Order 20-10 is no longer in effect. Renewal notices will then be sent, and licensees will have 90 days to renew by attesting to meeting the continuing education requirement and paying the renewal fee.

Q: My profession limits the number of hours of online/home study continuing education, but in-person continuing education is not available at this time. My profession is not listed in Executive Order 20-10. Can I obtain all of my continuing education hours for renewal or reinstatement online or by home study?

A: The Department will not enforce any limit on the number of continuing education hours obtained online or by home study for renewal or reinstatement of any type of license during the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency. The Department will be as flexible as possible for renewals that take place following the emergency. If licensees obtained online or home study CE hours during the emergency because in-person courses were not available, the Department will accept those CE hours even if the renewal (expiration date) for that profession takes place after the emergency has ended. Communication will be sent to licensees once any subsequent renewal period begins so that licensees know when the limits for online or home study CE are back in place.

Q: My license is set to expire during the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency but is not one of the identified professions listed above. Do I still need to renew?

A: All other professions not listed in Executive Order 20-10 will need to renew their licenses as usual.

Q: What about renewals after the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency is lifted?

A: After that time, licensees will be subject to the regular requirements of renewal at the next regular renewal period.

Q: My profession is not renewing soon. Does Executive Order 20-10 apply to me?

A: Maybe. If the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency continues until the time of expiration for your license, then the suspension of renewal requirements included in Executive Order 20-10 will still be in effect.

Q: What about reinstatement of my inactive/expired license? Do I still need continuing competency/education?

A: The Department is suspending continuing competency/continuing education requirements for reinstatement of inactive/expired licenses during the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency and for 30 days afterward.

Q: Do I need to submit the fee for my license?

A: During the State Declaration of Public Health Emergency and for 30 days after the Declaration is lifted, license fees for initial licenses do not need to be received by the Department in order to issue an initial license for those applying for licensure as:

- Physicians (MD and DO)
- Nurses (CNM, NP, CNS, CRNA, RN, and LPN)
- Emergency medical services (EMR, EMT, AEMT, and paramedics)
- Pharmacists, pharmacist interns, and pharmacy technicians

This will allow the Department to receive applications electronically and expedite the application process. License fees will need to be submitted within 90 days from when the Declaration of Public Health Emergency is lifted, but are not required in order to issue the license.

Q: Can I submit my application electronically?

A: Yes. Applications for licensure as:

- Physicians (MD and DO)
- Nurses (CNM, NP, CNS, CRNA, RN, and LPN)
- Emergency medical services (EMR, EMT, AEMT, and paramedics)
- Pharmacists, pharmacist interns, and pharmacy technicians




can be submitted via electronic methods, which include e-mail and fax.

Q: What about supporting documents? Can they be sent electronically?

A: Yes. Supporting documents can be submitted electronically to the Department directly from the source.





Q: Do I still need to submit my fingerprints for licensure? (Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, psychologists, provisionally licensed psychologists, advanced emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and professions authorized to prescribe controlled substances ([Medical and osteopathic physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants, veterinarians, dentist, temporary educational permits, optometrists, podiatrists])

A: Yes. You will still need to submit fingerprints to the Nebraska State Patrol for the purposes of running a criminal background check, but a license can be issued to you before the results of the criminal background check have been received by the Department. Licenses are subject to any findings of the criminal background check, once completed.

Q: I'm a recent graduate, but I can't take my licensure examination because the testing centers are closed. Can I get a temporary license until I can take my licensure examination?

A: Executive Order 20-10 allows applicants for licensure as physicians, nurses, and pharmacists to be issued a provisional license pending successful examination results or the duration of the emergency, whichever is shorter. All other requirements of licensure must still be met. Provisional licenses will expire once examination results are available or one year from the date of issuance, whichever occurs first.

Q: I am a current medical school student. How does the order affect me?

A: The order does not change current law, which provides an exception from requiring a license to practice medicine and surgery (Neb. Rev. Stat. 38-2025(4)) for "Students of medicine who are studying in an accredited school or college of medicine and who gratuitously prescribe for and treat disease under the supervision of a licensed physician." Accredited schools or colleges of medicine in Nebraska have authority over medical students and can choose how to involve medical students in prescribing for and treating patients during this emergency.

Q: I'm a physician and I would like to have more than four (4) physician assistants working for me at one time. Can I do that now?

A: Executive Order 20-10 permits physicians to have any number of physician assistants under their supervision and without a written supervisory agreement.

Q: I'm a physician assistant and want to work under the supervision of a physician that is not licensed in Nebraska, but who is working in Nebraska under a license in another state. Can I still work under this physician's supervision?

A: Yes. Executive Order 20-10 allows for physicians licensed in another U.S. state or territory to practice in Nebraska without a Nebraska license. Those physicians may work with and supervise physician assistants in Nebraska. Physician assistants licensed in another U.S. state or territory are also allowed under the order to practice in Nebraska without a Nebraska license.