



COLORADO

Department of
Regulatory Agencies

Division of Professions and Occupations

COVID-19 FAQ for Healthcare Professionals

Regarding Governor Polis's March 19, 2020 [Executive Order 2020 009](#) banning elective and non-emergency procedures

- **Question: What does the order apply to?**

Answer: The order applies to medical, dental, and veterinary procedures deemed voluntary or elective, meaning that the surgery or procedure can be delayed for a minimum of three months without undue risk to the current or future health of the patient as determined by the guidelines developed by the hospital, surgical center or other treating medical facility.

- **Question: What does it NOT apply to?**

Answer: The order does not apply when the following conditions are present:

- There is a threat to the patient's life if the surgery or procedure is not performed;
- There is a threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system if the surgery or procedure is not performed;
- There is a risk of metastasis or progression of staging of a disease or condition if the surgery or procedure is not performed; or
- There is a risk that the patient's condition will rapidly deteriorate if the surgery or procedure is not performed and there is a threat to life, or to an extremity or organ system, or of permanent dysfunction or disability.

- **Question: *Who* does the order apply to?**

Answer: The order applies to professionals that work within a hospital, office, clinic, or practice in the medical, dental, or veterinary fields. More specifically, to all of those whom it applies, the aforementioned criteria for providing lifesaving and critical services needs to be assessed.

DORA-licensed professionals that need to be diligent about compliance with the order include, but are not limited to Acupuncturists, Audiologists, Chiropractors, Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Hearing Aid Providers, Massage Therapists, Naturopathic Doctors,

Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Optometrists, Podiatrists, Physicians, Physical Therapists, Respiratory Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Surgical Assistants, and Veterinarians.

The state respects the doctor/patient relationship, and understands if procedures need to be conducted to prevent further deterioration or loss of life. However, the intent of this order is to free up personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators so that they are available to those professionals working on the front lines of the epidemic.

Further, the state strongly recommends all licensed professionals adhere to [CDPHE's guidance](#) regarding social distancing. Under this guidance, individuals are advised not to interact unless they can maintain a six-foot distance to prevent the spread of the virus. Contact between practitioners and clients should be limited to essential services *only* because all non-essential contact heightens the risk of spreading the virus.

In short, we ask that all health care professionals remain acutely conscientious about the procedures being conducted to ensure that they support overall public health, wellness, and welfare during this challenging time.

- **Question: Who does it NOT apply to?**

Answer: Medical professionals at rural and critical access hospitals are exempt from this Order, but are strongly advised to comply on a voluntary basis, and *must* still comply with CDC guidelines for PPE preservation. Although exempt, we encourage an assessment of providing lifesaving and critical services to an effort to preserve resources.

Rural hospitals are defined as hospitals located in a non-metropolitan county or hospitals within a metropolitan county that are far away from the urban center, as defined by a rural urban community area code of four or above (HRSA 2017).

Critical Access Hospital is a designation given to eligible rural hospitals by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) under the provisions of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

Regarding the widespread need for personal protective equipment (PPE)

- **Question: Who can I contact if me or my workplace has PPE to donate?**

Answer: If you have small quantities of supplies to contribute, between 1-25 boxes of personal protective equipment (i.e., six boxes of protective eye glasses) we ask that

you donate these supplies to your [local public health department](#), [local community health center](#), community clinic, or local hospital.

If you have more than 25 boxes, or the pieces of larger equipment such as anesthesia machines or ventilators, we ask that you fill out [THIS FORM](#), so we can determine if these items are needed in our state's emergency supply. Once we receive your form entry, we will follow up with you to determine next steps. **Please complete [THIS FORM](#) by 12:00 Friday, March 26.**

Additional questions can be directed to PPE@state.co.us.

- **Question: Who can I contact if my healthcare facility is in need of PPE?**

Answer: If you or your organization are experiencing a shortage or outage of personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, gowns, etc) to conduct essential or life saving functions during this crisis, please reach out to your [local emergency manager](#) or [local public health department](#). These entities are connected to the state's emergency operations center through their local/Tribal emergency operations center, and are the best contact for your request. Thank you for your work serving Coloradans during this difficult time.

Additional questions can be directed to PPE@state.co.us.

Regarding DORA's March 17, 2020 [Emergency Measures for Healthcare Professionals](#)

- **Question: Which healthcare professions do the emergency suspension of statutes and rules apply to?**

Answer: The suspension of rules and statutes to broaden the healthcare workforce *only* apply at this time to those professions that fall under the Medical Practice Act, the Nurse Practice Act, the Pharmacy Practice Act, and the Respiratory Practice Act. Additional measures may be taken for other professions in the healthcare field in the coming days, so please continue to monitor your email and check DORA's website for updates.

Specific information on these measures for each profession are located at the following links:

- [Emergency Guidance for Physicians](#)
- [Emergency Guidance for Nurses and Assistants](#)
- [Emergency Guidance for Pharmacists](#)
- [Emergency Guidance for Respiratory Therapists](#)

- **Question: Do I still need to contact DORA to obtain some type of provisional license, or can I just start volunteering at healthcare facilities without a Colorado license if I fit the exemptions or suspended rules/statutes?**

Answer: Under the emergency measures taken by the Division of Professions and Occupations, health care professionals wanting to re-enter the workforce do not need to contact the division or obtain a provisional license provided the following conditions are met:

1. The individual holds a license as a physician, nurse, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist, and that license is in good standing (meaning not revoked, suspended, or on probation) in another country or U.S. state OR
2. The individual has an inactive or expired license as a physician, nurse, pharmacist, or respiratory therapist that, when active, was in good standing (meaning not revoked, suspended, or on probation);
3. The individual does not hold himself/herself out to be a licensed practitioner, but is transparent about the current status of his/her license;
4. The services are performed on a voluntary basis; and
5. The individual ceases working in the healthcare field and either resumes inactive/expired status or pursues licensure through the proper channels once the state of emergency has been declared over in Colorado.

Note: Healthcare facilities taking on additional help during the crisis reserve the right to check the status or former status of a professional's license to ensure that it was in good standing when last active through the Division of Professions and Occupations' [Healthcare Professions Profile Program \(HPPP\)](#).

- **Question: Are there any exceptions for those who have never held a healthcare license, but have the requisite training and are still acquiring pre-licensure experience under supervision?**

Answer: At this time, no exceptions have been made for healthcare personnel in training or who have not yet acquired the requisite number of pre-licensure hours. This may change, so continue to check [DORA's COVID-19 updates](#).

- **Question: Who can I contact regarding the specific circumstances of my expired, inactive, out-of-state, or international health care license?**

Answer: We are asking that at this time all questions be sent via email to DPO@state.co.us, and appreciate your patience as we work diligently to respond to each inquiry with the correct, most up-to-date information.