

## NCMB COVID-19 Response Summary of Board Decisions

The North Carolina Medical Board (NCMB) has taken many steps to support the state’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following is a list of actions taken to remove barriers and support physicians, physician assistants and the health care system in the state during this rapidly-evolving situation.

### March 11, 2020 – Emergency Meeting:

- Approved a new type of emergency licensure to bring recently inactivated licensees back to the work force during the state of emergency. NCMB now has two types of emergency licensure available – both are easy, quick, and free:
  - Retired or inactive licensure – allows physicians and PAs with a recently inactive NC license to return to service during a state of emergency; must have been inactivated within the last two years.
  - Limited Emergency Licensure – allows out-of-state physicians and PAs to volunteer or work in North Carolina during a state of emergency. Examples include: telemedicine or providers coming from other states.

The emergency licensure resource page can be found at [www.ncmedboard.org/crisis](http://www.ncmedboard.org/crisis).

### March 18, 2020 – March Board Meeting:

- Temporarily suspended background checks for license applications due to lack of availability of fingerprinting services, which is a key element to conducting a background check. NCMB can access secondary sources to provide this information. Applicants who were granted a license without a background check will be required to complete this process once fingerprinting services resume.

### March 27, 2020 – Emergency Meeting:

- Adopted rules requested by NC DHHS Secretary, Dr. Mandy Cohen, to reduce the occurrence of reported stockpiling or inappropriate prescribing of chloroquine, azithromycin and other medications, and ensure that these drugs are available to patients who need them. The rule restricts the use of these drugs as a preventative medication for

COVID-19 but does not ban prescribing these medications for treatment of a patient diagnosed with the illness.

- Approved an [order](#) to postpone USMLE and COMLEX–USA Step/Level 2 testing requirements for medical students prior to beginning a residency program. This will allow medical students who have otherwise completed the requirements to graduate from medical school and been accepted into a North Carolina residency training program to start their residency, which will almost certainly include assisting in battling the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Approved an [order](#) to allow Fellows with a Resident Training License (RTL) to apply for a Limited Emergency License, which provides a temporary unrestricted and full medical license during the declared state of emergency. This action will allow several hundred physicians with proven competence in a primary specialty to take care of patients and ease the potential strain on physicians currently in the health care system.
- Approved an [order](#) to allow hospitals, health systems, or multi-specialty group practices to temporarily reassign a physician assistant to a new practice area to meet a critical need without formally notifying NCMB of the new supervisory arrangements. The supervising physician and facility administration should ensure the physician assistant:
  - Is reassigned to perform only those medical tasks for which they are competent and qualified to do
  - Has reasonable and immediate access to a physician, either in person or electronically, should medical issues arise
  - Complies with all applicable rules including the requirement to confer at least monthly with a physician to ensure meaningful supervision and quality assurance within the new practice setting.

NCMB is doing all it can to support Gov. Cooper’s call to increase the supply of qualified medical professionals available to help. NCMB has a resource page that provides specific details on the rules and orders, FAQs, as well as up-to-date information on the COVID-19 response at: [www.ncmedboard.org/covid](http://www.ncmedboard.org/covid).