



## Iowa Board of Physical and Occupational Therapy Guidance Related to Governor Reynold's Proclamations & COVID-19

Governor Kim Reynolds has issued a Proclamation of Emergency Disaster. In this Proclamation, Governor Reynolds temporarily suspended a number of regulatory provisions applicable to various professions. The full text of the Proclamation is available on the Governor's website. The Board issues the following guidance regarding the Proclamation:

### **License Renewal**

The Board office is still processing renewals at this time. Licensees are not required to renew for the duration of the Proclamation. Licensees who wish to renew as scheduled are encouraged to renew using the online system.

### **Continuing Education**

Licensees have until June 30, 2021 to complete the continuing education required for license renewal for any license set to expire in 2020. Licensees may renew prior to completing the required continuing education. In order to complete the renewal application, licensees will need to attest to completion of the required continuing education. Licensees should attest to the completion of the required hours if they have completed, or plan to complete, the required continuing education by June 30, 2021.

Any Board rules that require licensees to complete any continuing education in-person are waived for this license renewal, regardless of when the license is set to expire.

### **Background Checks**

For applicants who apply for a license that requires a background check, the application will be processed prior to performing the background check for the duration of the Proclamation. The applicant will still be sent a fingerprint packet after submission of the application, but applicants do not need to return the completed fingerprint packet until after the expiration of the Proclamation. Applicants will have 60 days after the Proclamation expires to return a completed fingerprint packet to the Board office.

Physical Therapists and Physical Therapist Assistants only—Note that licensees will not be eligible for PT Compact privileges until the background check is completed.

**The Board office has received several questions regarding telehealth and is providing the following information to all licensees:**

The Proclamation eases rules that establish preconditions, limitations, or restrictions on the provision of telehealth services and other administrative rules that require face-to-face interactions with health care providers. This is intended to suspend rules that may require a physical interaction prior to utilizing telehealth or otherwise restrict the types of services or manner of services that can be provided via telehealth. The Board's rules on telehealth do not impose any such requirements—therefore, these provisions of the Proclamation have no effect on the Board's rules.

The Proclamation directs the Insurance Commissioner to ensure that any health carrier reimburses a health care professional for covered services via telehealth. The Board is unable to answer questions about what therapy services may be reimbursable.

The federal government has relaxed HIPAA to the extent it has minimum technological requirements for telehealth. Under the relaxed requirements, providers may use non-public facing communication applications that may otherwise not be HIPAA-compliant. Iowa licensed providers may utilize the technologies described in the Office for Civil Rights (part of HHS) announcement on March 17, 2020, which includes the use of FaceTime, Google Hangouts video, and Skype.

The Proclamation temporarily suspends regulatory provisions that required Iowa licensure for providing physical therapy and occupational therapy services to patients located in Iowa. Accordingly, a physical therapist or occupational therapist who holds an active license in another state may provide telehealth or electronic services to patients located in Iowa.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

The Iowa Department of Public Health has issued orders and gathered resources to assist healthcare workers with providing in-person services during this public health disaster emergency. Prior to performing in-person services, please review this information and ensure that you are complying with all orders and appropriate guidance to safeguard the safety of yourself and your patients:

<https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Healthcare>.