



Virginia
Regulatory
Town Hall

Final Regulation Agency Background Document

Agency Name:	Board of Medicine, Department of Health Professions
VAC Chapter Number:	18 VAC 85-50-10 et seq.
Regulation Title:	Regulations Governing the Practice of Physician Assistants
Action Title:	Inactive licensure
Date:	February 9, 2001

Please refer to the Administrative Process Act (§ 9-6.14:9.1 *et seq.* of the *Code of Virginia*), Executive Order Twenty-Five (98), Executive Order Fifty-Eight (99) , and the *Virginia Register Form, Style and Procedure Manual* for more information and other materials required to be submitted in the final regulatory action package.

Summary

Please provide a brief summary of the new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or the regulation being repealed. There is no need to state each provision or amendment; instead give a summary of the regulatory action. If applicable, generally describe the existing regulation. Do not restate the regulation or the purpose and intent of the regulation in the summary. Rather, alert the reader to all substantive matters or changes contained in the proposed new regulation, amendments to an existing regulation, or the regulation being repealed. Please briefly and generally summarize any substantive changes made since the proposed action was published.

The amendments establish inactive licensure for physician assistants pursuant to the specific authority granted in the Code of Virginia by Chapter 469 of the 1998 Acts of the Assembly. The amended regulations set forth the conditions for inactive licensure and requirements for reactivation of an inactive license which include evidence of competency to return to active practice.

Changes Made Since the Proposed Stage

Please detail any changes, other than strictly editorial changes, made to the text of the proposed regulation since its publication. Please provide citations of the sections of the proposed regulation that have been altered since the proposed stage and a statement of the purpose of each change.

There have been no changes made to the proposed regulations since adoption and publication.

Statement of Final Agency Action

Please provide a statement of the final action taken by the agency: including the date the action was taken, the name of the agency taking the action, and the title of the regulation.

On February 8, 2001, the Board of Medicine adopted final amendments to 18 VAC 85-50-10 et seq., Regulations Governing the Practice of Physician Assistants.

Basis

Please identify the state and/or federal source of legal authority to promulgate the regulation. The discussion of this statutory authority should: 1) describe its scope and the extent to which it is mandatory or discretionary; and 2) include a brief statement relating the content of the statutory authority to the specific regulation. In addition, where applicable, please describe the extent to which proposed changes exceed federal minimum requirements. Full citations of legal authority and, if available, web site addresses for locating the text of the cited authority, shall be provided. If the final text differs from that of the proposed, please state that the Office of the Attorney General has certified that the agency has the statutory authority to promulgate the final regulation and that it comports with applicable state and/or federal law

18 VAC 85-50-10 et seq. Regulations Governing the Practice of Physician Assistants was promulgated under the general authority of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Chapter 24 establishes the general powers and duties of health regulatory boards including the responsibility to promulgate regulations, levy fees, administer a licensure and renewal program, and issue an inactive license.

§ 54.1-2400. General powers and duties of health regulatory boards.--The general powers and duties of health regulatory boards shall be:

- 1. To establish the qualifications for registration, certification or licensure in accordance with the applicable law which are necessary to ensure competence and integrity to engage in the regulated professions.*
- 2. To examine or cause to be examined applicants for certification or licensure. Unless otherwise required by law, examinations shall be administered in writing or shall be a demonstration of manual skills.*

3. *To register, certify or license qualified applicants as practitioners of the particular profession or professions regulated by such board.*
4. *To establish schedules for renewals of registration, certification and licensure.*
5. *To levy and collect fees for application processing, examination, registration, certification or licensure and renewal that are sufficient to cover all expenses for the administration and operation of the Department of Health Professions, the Board of Health Professions and the health regulatory boards.*
6. *To promulgate regulations in accordance with the Administrative Process Act (§ 9-6.14:1 et seq.) which are reasonable and necessary to administer effectively the regulatory system. Such regulations shall not conflict with the purposes and intent of this chapter or of Chapter 1 and Chapter 25 of this title.*
7. *To revoke, suspend, restrict, or refuse to issue or renew a registration, certificate or license which such board has authority to issue for causes enumerated in applicable law and regulations.*
8. *To appoint designees from their membership or immediate staff to coordinate with the Intervention Program Committee and to implement, as is necessary, the provisions of Chapter 25.1 (§ 54.1-2515 et seq.) of this title. Each health regulatory board shall appoint one such designee.*
9. *To take appropriate disciplinary action for violations of applicable law and regulations.*
10. *To appoint a special conference committee, composed of not less than two members of a health regulatory board, to act in accordance with § 9-6.14:11 upon receipt of information that a practitioner of the appropriate board may be subject to disciplinary action. The special conference committee may (i) exonerate the practitioner; (ii) reinstate the practitioner; (iii) place the practitioner on probation with such terms as it may deem appropriate; (iv) reprimand the practitioner; (v) modify a previous order; and (vi) impose a monetary penalty pursuant to § 54.1-2401. The order of the special conference committee shall become final thirty days after service of the order unless a written request to the board for a hearing is received within such time. If service of the decision to a party is accomplished by mail, three days shall be added to the thirty-day period. Upon receiving a timely written request for a hearing, the board or a panel of the board shall then proceed with a hearing as provided in § 9-6.14:12, and the action of the committee shall be vacated. This subdivision shall not be construed to affect the authority or procedures of the Boards of Medicine and Nursing pursuant to §§ 54.1-2919 and 54.1-3010.*
11. *To convene, at their discretion, a panel consisting of at least five board members or, if a quorum of the board is less than five members, consisting of a quorum of the members to conduct formal proceedings pursuant to § 9-6.14:12, decide the case, and issue a final agency case decision. Any decision rendered by majority vote of such panel shall have the same effect as if made by the full board and shall be subject to court review in accordance with the Administrative Process Act. No member who participates in an informal proceeding conducted in accordance with § 9-6.14:11 shall serve on a panel conducting formal proceedings pursuant to § 9-6.14:12 to consider the same matter.*

12. *To issue inactive licenses and certificates and promulgate regulations to carry out such purpose. Such regulations shall include, but not be limited to, the qualifications, renewal fees, and conditions for reactivation of such licenses or certificates.*

Purpose

Please provide a statement explaining the need for the new or amended regulation. This statement must include the rationale or justification of the final regulatory action and detail the specific reasons it is essential to protect the health, safety or welfare of citizens. A statement of a general nature is not acceptable, particular rationales must be explicitly discussed. Please include a discussion of the goals of the proposal and the problems the proposal is intended to solve.

The purpose of the amendments is to establish inactive licensure for physician assistants pursuant to the specific authority granted in the code of Virginia by Chapter 469 of the 1998 Acts of the Assembly. The amended regulations set forth the qualifications for reactivation of an inactive license which include current certification by the national credentialing body for physician assistants and provide some assurance of competency to practice consistent with the Board's responsibility for protection of the public health and safety.

The Department of Health Professions sought legislation in the 1998 General Assembly to give authorization to all boards to issue an active license. Some boards within the Department already had such authority in the practice act for the particular professions regulated, but an amendment to § 54.1-2400 granted general authority to set out the qualifications, fees, and conditions for reactivation of inactive licensure.

Substance

Please identify and explain the new substantive provisions, the substantive changes to existing sections, or both where appropriate. Please note that a more detailed discussion is required under the statement of the regulatory action's detail.

The new section would establish a category of inactive licensure and specify that such a license holder may renew by indicating his request for inactive licensure on a renewal form and payment of the required fee.

To reactivate an inactive license, a physician assistant is required to provide evidence of continued competency to resume practice and to pay the difference between the current inactive and active renewal fee.

Issues

Please provide a statement identifying the issues associated with the final regulatory action. The term "issues" means: 1) the advantages and disadvantages to the public of implementing the new provisions; 2) the advantages and disadvantages to the agency or the Commonwealth; and 3) other pertinent matters of interest to the regulated community, government officials, and the public. If there are no disadvantages to the public or the Commonwealth, please include a sentence to that effect.

The Department of Health Professions sought legislation in the 1998 General Assembly to give authorization to all boards to issue an active license. Some boards within the Department already had such authority in the practice act for the particular professions regulated, but an amendment to § 54.1-2400 granted general authority to set out the qualifications, fees, and conditions for reactivation of inactive licensure.

While the requirements for biennial renewal of licensure as a physician assistant are minimal, the Board determined that all its licensees should have the option of requesting an inactive license if they are not currently practicing their profession. The Board has also adopted a lesser fee for renewal of an inactive license.

Advantages and disadvantages

There are no disadvantages for the public which remains protected by requirements that assure that an active physician assistant is current in his skills and knowledge. By requiring an inactive licensee to provide evidence of continued competency to practice by certification through the NCCPA, the Board has the opportunity to determine whether the practitioner has remained professionally current with continuing education or engaged in some other learning activities to update his knowledge and skills. For persons who do not want to actively practice for a period of time, these regulations will allow them to maintain an inactive license and eliminate the need to reapply for reinstatement of an expired license.

Public Comment

Please summarize all public comment received during the public comment period and provide the agency response. If no public comment was received, please include a statement indicating that fact.

There was no comment received either at the Public Hearing which was held on December 1, 2000 or during the 60-Day Comment Period which ended January 5, 2001.

Detail of Changes

Please detail any changes, other than strictly editorial changes, that are being proposed. Please detail new substantive provisions, all substantive changes to existing sections, or both where appropriate. This statement should provide a section-by-section description - or crosswalk - of changes implemented by the

proposed regulatory action. Include citations to the specific sections of an existing regulation being amended and explain the consequences of the changes.

18 VAC 85-50-58. Inactive licensure.

A new section is added to establish a category of inactive licensure and specify that such a license holder may renew by indicating his request for inactive licensure on a renewal form and payment of the required fee. The holder of an inactive license is not required to provide evidence of current certification by the NCCPA.

To reactivate an inactive license, a physician assistant is required to provide evidence of continued competency (recertification or current certification by NCCPA) to resume practice and to pay the difference between the current inactive and active renewal fee. The Board reserves the right to deny reactivation based on violations of law or regulation.

Family Impact Statement

Please provide an analysis of the regulatory action that assesses the impact on the institution of the family and family stability including the extent to which the regulatory action will: 1) strengthen or erode the authority and rights of parents in the education, nurturing, and supervision of their children; 2) encourage or discourage economic self-sufficiency, self-pride, and the assumption of responsibility for oneself, one's spouse, and one's children and/or elderly parents; 3) strengthen or erode the marital commitment; and 4) increase or decrease disposable family income.

The agency has reviewed the amendments in relation to their impact on the institution of the family and family stability. There would be no effect of the proposal on the authority and rights of parents, economic self-sufficiency or the marital commitment. Since the amended regulation will permit inactive licensure at one-half the renewal fee for those practitioners not practicing in the Virginia, there could be a very minimal effect on disposable family income.