



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

BOARD OF PHARMACY

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March 12, 2020

To: All licensees regulated under AS 08.80
Re: Response to COVID-19

Dear Licensees,

On March 11th, Governor Mike Dunleavy declared a public health emergency in response to the coronavirus pandemic and in anticipation of cases being reported in Alaska. The Board of Pharmacy has been keeping a magnified focus on the progression of COVID-19 and is evaluating its potential impact to operating pharmacies in Alaska, should the virus affect pharmacist staffing. While we are not aware of any cases currently in the state, we have received inquiries regarding staffing concerns and the impact to patient care. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and release further information as new developments are available. Please be assured that the board has the authority in its emergency preparedness regulations, 12 AAC 52.985, to continue to proactively address resource concerns and assist in expedited licensing functions to deploy pharmacy personnel as necessary. The board is also working closely with state entities as we further prepare for an emergency response.

For pharmacies:

Last year, the board published new regulations around emergency preparedness to ensure pharmacies have clear steps available for dispensing prescriptions in the event of a state- or Governor-declared emergency. As outlined in 12 AAC 52.985, and as empowered by the Governor's emergency declaration yesterday, the board will—and is prepared to—respond accordingly. In the current state of emergency, pharmacies can dispense prescriptions in accordance with the published regulation to assist in continuation of therapies. These regulations are appended to this letter.

For prospective pharmacists:

When the board evaluated the emergency preparedness regulation last year, we eliminated the requirement in 12 AAC 52.110 to complete and pass the Multistate Jurisprudence Pharmacy Examination (MPJE) in order to align with the intent of expediting pharmacist licensure in the event of an emergency. The application for an emergency permit is located within the pharmacist license application (form #08-4032), and can be found at pharmacy.alaska.gov. The corresponding regulations are also appended to this letter.

For existing pharmacists:

In addition to the guidance provided in 12 AAC 52.985, the board recommends that pharmacists keep up to date with CDC recommendations published at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>. This will allow you to provide the most up to date information to your community. Please periodically monitor pharmacy.alaska.gov for subsequent guidance that may be issued in response to the coronavirus.

Thank you,

Board of Pharmacy

12 AAC 52.110. EMERGENCY PHARMACIST PERMIT. (a) If the board determines that an emergency exists, the board will issue an emergency pharmacist permit for the purpose of providing coverage in a pharmacy that is temporarily without the services of a pharmacist due to death, illness, or other emergency circumstances, to an applicant who

- (1) submits a completed application for a pharmacist license;
- (2) pays the emergency permit fee required in 12 AAC 02.310;
- (3) submits a certified true copy of a current pharmacist license in good standing in another state;
- (4) repealed 10/31/2019; and
- (5) has not been convicted of a felony or another crime that affects the applicant's ability to practice pharmacy competently and safely.

(b) An emergency permit is valid for 60 days or until the emergency circumstances no longer exist, whichever is shorter.

(c) An applicant may not receive more than one emergency permit. An emergency permit is not renewable.

Authority: AS 08.80.005 AS 08.80.030 AS 08.80.155

12 AAC 52.985. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. (a) If, as a consequence of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, a disaster emergency is declared by the governor under AS 26.23.020 which results in the inability to refill existing prescriptions, the board will cooperate with the state, borough, city, or town to assist in the provision of drugs, devices, and professional services to the public.

(b) If, as a consequence of a natural disaster or terrorist attack, a disaster emergency is declared by the governor of another state or territory, or a province of Canada which results in an individual being temporarily relocated to Alaska who is unable to refill an existing prescription, the board will assist in the provision of drugs, devices, and professional services to the relocated individual.

(c) When a disaster emergency has been declared, a pharmacist in the area of the declared emergency may dispense a one-time emergency refill prescription of up to a 30-day supply of a prescribed medication if

- (1) in the pharmacist's professional opinion the medication is essential to the maintenance of life or to the continuation of therapy; and
- (2) the pharmacist makes a good faith effort to reduce the patient's prescription drug information to a written prescription marked "emergency prescription" and then files and maintains the prescription in accordance with 12 AAC 52.450.

(d) If a declared disaster emergency continues for more than 21 days after a pharmacist dispenses an emergency prescription under (c) of this section, the pharmacist may dispense one additional emergency refill prescription of up to a 30-day supply of the prescribed medication.

(e) To assist during an emergency, a pharmacist who is not licensed in this state may apply for emergency licensure in accordance with 12 AAC 52.110.

Authority: AS 08.80.005 AS 08.80.030