

Physician Assistant Frequently Asked Questions

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****DO NOT begin working as a Physician Assistant until you have received official notification in writing from the Medical Board of approval for your Primary Supervising Physician.**

****License Renewal is required biennially in the month of your birth. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ensure your renewal. The Board may send a courtesy notification, but that is not guaranteed. To ensure there is no lapse in your licensure, get in the habit of always CHECKING THE STATUS OF YOUR LICENSE EVERY YEAR ON YOUR BIRTHDAY.**

1. Is it true that I can apply for a Physician Assistant license without a supervising physician?

YES: you can apply for a Georgia license as a physician assistant and be approved for such license without a Primary Supervising Physician. However you **cannot** begin working as a physician assistant without submission of any fees; utilization Application; Basic Job Description signed by your Primary Supervising; and have received official notification in writing from the Medical Board of approval for your Supervising Physician.

2. Is it true that I can have more than one Board Approved Primary Supervising Physician on file and work with both Primary Supervising Physicians?

YES. There is no limit as to how many Primary Supervising Physicians you can apply for. However each application for a Primary Supervising Physician must accompany all required fees and documents in order to be considered. You cannot begin working until you have received official notification in writing from the Medical Board of approval for your Supervising Physician.

3. I am currently licensed but do not have a job what should I do about my license status?

You have one of two options in this scenario, you can continue to maintain your current license (1) or you can request inactive status (2).

- (1) A PA can apply to obtain licensure as a physician assistant. Therefore, you can be granted a license without a Supervising MD. Additionally, PA licenses can be renewed without a board approved Supervising MD. This renewal is biennially on the last day of the month in which the licensee's birthday falls. PA license renewal must include a completed renewal application; completed Board approved continuing education requirements, and payment of a renewal fee.
- (2) The Board may grant inactive status. For example, a person who plans to retire or who does not intend to practice as a Physician Assistant in the state of Georgia in the foreseeable future may apply to the Board for inactive status by submitting an inactive application and the applicable fee. Please note that a PA who elects to reactivate their inactive license will need to submit a reinstatement application and complete CME as required by law. If the PA has been out of practice for more than 3 years, the Board may elect to require NCCPA recertification, shadowing hours up 240 hours, and possible job specific additional CME.

THEREFORE, IT IS WISE TO CONSIDER CONTINUING TO MAINTAIN YOUR LICENSE AS OPPOSED TO PURSUING INCATIVE STATUS.

Reminder: You CANNOT work without a board approved supervising MD, utilization and approved Job Description.

4. I just found out that my Office Manager did not renew my license as I had thought. My license is now lapsed, what do I do now?

STOP WORKING IMMEDIATELY!!! NOTIFY THE BOARD, notify your Primary Supervising Physician and begin the process of license renewal application. DO NOT return to working as a Physician Assistant until you have received written notification of reinstatement of your license and approval of your Primary Supervising Physician.

ADDITIONALLY NOTE: YOU, the licensee are SOLELY responsible for ensuring your license renewal is completed every 2 years during your birth month. This is NOT the responsibility of an office manager, HR department, etc.

5. How do I apply for a physician assistant license?

ONLINE: The quickest and easiest way to apply for this type of license is to submit your application online by visiting our website at www.medicalboard.georgia.gov

and click the Apply, Renew, Reinstate or Manage License link. You will be required to REGISTER first before you can apply for this license.

PAPER APPLICATION: If you prefer to apply by paper application, you may visit our website at www.medicalboard.georgia.gov and click the Professional Resources link, click the applications center link, then the PA link. A request for an application may also be requested in writing by submitting the following information: your legal name and mailing address, or by contacting the Board directly at (404) 656-3913 or 3914.

6. How long does it take to obtain a Physician Assistant License?

The normal processing time for a physician assistant license, depending on timeliness of primary source documentation and other required information, is 4-6 weeks. The Medical Board verifies all applicant information as “primary source” verification. This means that we must receive the information DIRECTLY from the issuing source. (e.g., School transcripts must come directly from your school. We will not accept a non-certified copy).

Once your application is complete, your file will be sent to quality assurance and reviewed within 10 business days and an initial licensure determination will be made. You will be notified in writing of the initial determination after the next scheduled Medical Board meeting date when your application will be considered.

7. Does an application for a Georgia Medical license have an expiration date?

YES: Applications for a Georgia Physician Assistant license remain active for one-year only. If you applied for a Georgia Physician Assistant license and were not issued a permanent license within 12 months, you must reapply by submitting a new application, with your most current information, in addition to an application fees. Upon receipt and review of your application, we will notify you of any documentation previously provided which is acceptable. All other information, such as letters of reference and a current resume MUST BE resubmitted. We will not simply reactivate your old application.

8. I have a job offer and need a Physician Assistant license immediately. What should I do if my application is not considered complete by the 10-business day deadline to go to the next Board meeting?

Under these circumstances the Board encourages you to check with your primary source verifiers, (e.g., school transcripts, references, post-graduate training program, test scores, and out-of-state licensure verification), to make sure they send your information directly to the Medical Board in a timely fashion. The Board does not issue licenses without a completed application. YOU CANNOT BEGIN WORKING until you have received official notification in writing from the Medical Board of approval for your Supervising Physician.

9. I have decided not to move to Georgia and I want to withdraw my application. What should I do? Is my application fee refundable?

If you decide during the application process that you would like to withdraw your application, it is necessary for you to put this request in writing, sign and date the request and provide a brief explanation as to why you would like to withdraw your application. Fees paid to the Georgia Medical Board are non-refundable whether or not a license is issued, an application is withdrawn or the application is denied.

10. I am scheduled to complete my training program in June of next year, when should I apply for my Georgia Physician Assistant license?

Applications for a Physician Assistant license remain active for one year only. Therefore, you should not apply for a license with the Board until you have satisfactorily completed all of your required training.

11. I received my education outside of the United States. May I apply for a Physician Assistant license if I went to an international school?

NO: Georgia law requires satisfactory completion of a Physician Assistant training program that has been approved by the Board. The Board has not approved a Physician Assistant training program outside of the United States. A current list of Board approved Physician Assistant training programs will be made available to an applicant upon request. You may also access the American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) website at www.aapa.org

12. Does Georgia make a distinction between a Physician Anesthesia Assistant and a Physician Assistant when issuing a Physician Assistant License?

YES: The Georgia Medical Board has different requirements for a Physician Assistant for Primary Care and a Physician Anesthesia Assistant. The major differences are in training, the type of professional examination taken as well as a very different job description and responsibilities. Please read the *Physician Assistant Act* for detailed information as well as the rules of the *Georgia Composite Medical Board* for Physician Assistants.

13. I am a certified Physician Anesthesia Assistant and a certified Physician Assistant can I apply for a license to practice as both in Georgia?

Yes. You must submit a separate application for each position. You must have notification from the board of your approved Primary Supervising Physician prior to working. You must work within the scope of practice of your Primary Supervising Physician.

14. What is a temporary permit?

The Board may issue a temporary permit to any initial applicant who has otherwise met the requirements for Board licensure and who has either applied to take the next available certification examination (NCCAA or NCCPA Examination) or has already taken the examination and is awaiting the results thereof, with the following conditions:

The applicant must request this permit in writing.

Unless otherwise approved by the Board for extenuating circumstances, the permit shall be valid for a maximum period of ninety (90) days, but shall expire immediately upon notification of the applicant's failure to achieve a satisfactory score on the approved certification examination required (NCCAA or NCCPA Examination).

Even though you have filed an application with the Board, a temporary permit will not be issued until all administrative screening processes have been completed, and it is determined that further review by the Board is not needed. Applicants who have been granted licensure in another state(s) will not be eligible for temporary licensure.

15. What job duties may I perform under a temporary permit?

The Physician Assistant job duties, while working with a temporary permit, are limited to those duties contained in the Board approved "Basic Job Description." Temporary permit holders may not perform duties beyond the scope of practice of their board approved Primary Supervising Physician. Georgia does not issue locum tenens licenses or other limited temporary licenses.

16. I have a temporary permit, but I did not pass my required NCCPA/NCCAA examination. What should I do?

Applicants who hold a temporary permit but do not pass the required examination (NCCAA or NCCPA Examination) must **stop practicing immediately** upon notification of a failing score. You must immediately surrender your temporary permit to the Georgia Composite Medical Board. Board rules provide that you may be issued only one (1) temporary permit. Therefore, you may not practice until you provide the Board with proof of a passing score on your required examination (NCCAA or NCCPA Examination).

17. May I apply for a temporary Physician Assistant permit if I will be coming to Georgia for a couple of weeks, or a month?

NO. Georgia does not issue locum tenens licenses or other limited, temporary license for physicians or physician assistants. A temporary permit may only be

issued after an applicant has met all requirements established by the state of Georgia for permanent licensure. You must apply for a permanent Georgia Physician Assistant license if you wish to practice in Georgia.

18. What happens to my approved list of Alternate Physicians when I switch jobs or add/change a Primary Supervising Physician?

Your alternate physicians are an extension of your board approved Primary Supervising Physician. For EACH board approved Primary Supervising Physician application you have on file you will have a CORRESPONDING set of Alternate Supervising Physicians listed under that Primary Supervising Physician. If your relationship with your Primary Supervising Physician terminates for any reason, all corresponding alternate physicians are immediately terminated as well. If your Primary Supervising Physician retires, moves, or leaves the practice, an approved Alternate Physician cannot merely assume the role of your Primary Supervising Physician.

Continuing to practice under an alternate physician when your practice relationship with your board approved Primary Supervising Physician has changed, constitutes practice without licensure and could be subject to board discipline.

If you terminate or change your relationship with your board approved Primary Supervising Physician, a new add/change application for a Primary Supervising Physician must be submitted along with any new alternate physicians within that practice relationship.

19. Do I need to get approval for adding ADDITIONAL alternate physicians under my existing Approved Primary Supervising MD?

NO. The board does not approve alternate physicians. It is your responsibility to ensure any and all alternates you work with have signed the alternate form (Form E, Form F, or AC-1) prior to engaging in practice with them as your Alternate Supervising Physician. Your Primary Supervising Physician must sign this form as well. There is no limit as to how many alternate physicians you have on file under your Primary Supervising Physician. An alternate Supervising MD should be in the same practice or in a regular call arrangement with the Primary Supervising MD.

When adding an additional alternate physician, you may scan and email the completed/signed AC-1 form to the PA applications specialist and begin working with the alternate MD. You must also mail the form to the Board to be added to your file. It is your responsibility to send this form to the board and to maintain a copy for your records.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have a copy of all your signed Alternate Physicians forms, do not work under any Alternate Physician that you have not submitted notification to the board for and that you do not have a signature for.

Practicing under an alternate physician without signature(s) and notice sent to the board could be subject to board discipline.

20. I work as a Physician Assistant in a state or county facility, does this exempt me from the application and/or renewal fees?

YES: Employees working at state institutions or state hospitals or any other state run program are fee exempt. Physician Assistant employees of county operated health clinics or hospitals or any other county operated health care program are also fee exempt. However, state and county employees must meet all other eligibility requirements for licensure and must receive a Physician Assistant license. If you switch jobs and move into the private sector, you will be required to pay fees like all other private sector applicants.

21. Is there a fee required if I decide to switch jobs, or change/add a supervising physician? If so, what forms are required? Is it a requirement to seek prior approval from the Medical Board?

YES: There is a \$75.00 fee. If you switch jobs, you may go online and log into your account to complete and submit the Add/Change Application. You may also download the form from our website, www.medicalboard.georgia.gov

You CANNOT begin working with the new Primary Supervising Physician until you have received official notification in writing from the Medical Board of approval for your new Supervising Physician.

22. How do I report a change of address?

You may visit our website at www.medicalboard.georgia.gov, log into your account and update your address online. You may also send an e-mail to medbd@dch.ga.gov. Please be sure to include your full name, title, license number, your old address and the new address. It is very important to specify if the address change is for your mailing/practice address OR both. Also remember that the mailing address you provide will be the address listed on our website for the public to view UNLESS you provide a practice location address.

23. Are Physician Assistants in Georgia required to obtain continuing education? How do you verify if I have fulfilled my continuing education obligation?

YES: Physician assistants licensed to practice shall complete Board approved continuing medical education of not less than forty (40) hours biennially. At least ten (10) hours shall be directly related to the specialty of the Board approved primary supervising physician. Physician assistants who are authorized to issue prescription drug orders shall be required as a part of the number of hours of continuing education required herein, to complete a minimum of three (3) hours in

practice specific pharmaceuticals in which the physician assistant has prescription order privileges.

At the time of renewal, proof of continuing education IS NOT required unless you are randomly audited. If audited, you must provide to a representative of the Board, proof of completing your continuing education requirements. Failure to provide proof of continuing education completion may lead to possible action by the Medical Board.

24. May a PA practice in Georgia using a Physician Assistant license from another state?

NO: The only exception that allows out-of-state licensed Physician Assistants to practice in Georgia is when the U.S. military employs the individual, or other federal installation such as a veterans' hospital, or an Indian reservation. Physician Assistants who work for the federal government, as such, may not practice outside the employing federal facility without first obtaining a Georgia Physician Assistant license.

25. Is my Basic Job Description considered a part of my permanent record with my supervising physician?

YES: You, the supervising and alternative supervising physician(s) shall at all times maintain this information on file, to be readily available for inspection, evidencing current approval for utilization of the Physician Assistant and the applicable approved job description.

26. May I apply for a Medicaid or Medicare provider number with a temporary Georgia Physician Assistant permit?

NO: It is the Medical Board's understanding that both the Medicaid and Medicare programs DO NOT ACCEPT temporary permits for billing purposes. You must have your permanent Georgia Physician Assistant license BEFORE you apply for your provider number.