

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Board of Registration in Nursing

Module: Preparing for APRN Practice
Case Study – APRN practice without adhering to requirements

James started working in December 1998 as a RN/NP in an out-patient clinic affiliated with a large urban hospital. His collaborating physician, Dr. Smith, was Board certified in internal medicine. James provided primary care to an adult population. Per his guidelines, James reviewed all initial prescriptions for Schedule II medications within 72 hours with his supervising physician or, in the event that he was not available, a designee. Additionally, James met with Dr. Smith at least every three months to review general practice issues and his prescriptive practice. James got into the habit of documenting Schedule II reviews with Dr. Smith in the individual medical records and kept a journal of the patients and medications reviewed during the meeting that was held at least every three months.

As the clinic grew and new technology was introduced, James kept current on treatment protocols and the use of new equipment through continuing education programs offered by vendors, at the local college and through attendance at professional conferences.

James moved his personal residence in 2008. He failed to inform the Board or his professional certifying organization of his change in address. As his birthday drew near in 2010, James contacted the MA Board of Nursing to inquire about his renewal application. Board staff informed him that the application had been returned to the Board by the addressee. James immediately accessed the Board's web site, completed the change of address information and renewed his RN license and APRN authorization on line. Within a matter of days, James received both his RN license and APRN authorization wallet size cards in the mail.

Ten months after the Board's renewal process was completed, the hospital's credentialing coordinator contacted James and requested copies of his current RN license, current APRN authorization and proof of current certification from his choice of Board approved professional certifying organizations.

It was at this time that James realized he had not completed the application to renew his professional certification and that his certification had lapsed in 2008.

Discussion Points:

- 244 CMR 4.00 MA Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing in the Expanded Role
 - 244. CMR 9.04 Standards of Conduct for Advance Practice Nurses
 - Application for re-certification from Board approved professional certifying organization and review of requirements for continued certification.
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Based on an investigation by the Department of Public Health-Health Care Quality, a complaint was filed with the Board of Registration in Nursing (Board). During the Board's investigation it was found that James had immediately removed himself from practice as an APRN, took a leave of absence from his current employer, and updated his collaborating physician on the status of his patients. He worked in several facilities as a Registered Nurse while he completed the requirements to renew his certification. He withdrew his APRN authorization from the Board. It took James fourteen months to complete the certification process. Because his certification had lapsed, James was required to complete additional educational requirements and take the certification exam. Once the certification was obtained, James re-applied to the Board for APRN authorization. James was reprimanded by the Board for practicing as an advance practice registered nurse without current certification.