

Licensing FAQs

What types of medical licenses are available in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and what are the requirements?

Full license: You must hold an active full license to practice medicine independently in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. An active licensee must earn CME credits and maintain malpractice insurance. The full license fee is \$600.00. In certain cases, the Board may issue a full license with restrictions.

Administrative license: An administrative license is for a physician whose primary responsibilities are administrative or academic. It does not include authority to diagnose or treat patients, issue prescriptions for controlled substances, delegate medical acts or prescriptions authority, or issue opinions regarding medical necessity. The administrative license fee is \$600.00.

Limited license: Limited licenses are issued to physicians enrolled in post-graduate medical education programs in teaching hospitals in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All such training must be done in ACGME or AOA accredited programs, or in a sub-specialty clinical training or fellowship program in a health care facility, which conducts on its premises ACGME or AOA approved programs. A physician who holds or who has ever held a full Massachusetts license is not eligible for a limited license. The limited license fee is \$100.00.

Temporary license: A temporary license is not issued while a full or limited license is in process. In Massachusetts, a temporary license may be issued only to the following individuals:

- 1) Temporary Faculty Appointment License – may be issued to a visiting physician who is licensed to practice in another jurisdiction and who has a temporary faculty appointment certified by the dean of a medical school;

2) Temporary Substitute Physician License – may be issued to a physician licensed in another state to act as a substitute physician in Massachusetts for three months; or

3) Temporary CME License – may be issued to a physician licensed in another state to participate in a course of continuing medical education.

The temporary license fee is \$250.00. If you are eligible for a temporary license, you may apply online through the Board’s website.

Volunteer license: A volunteer license is for physicians who practice medicine at work sites approved by the Board. A volunteer licensee may not accept compensation for his or her practice of medicine. A volunteer licensee is subject to the same conditions and requirements as a full licensee. The volunteer license fee is \$600.00.

For more information regarding the eligibility requirements for licensure and the application fees, please see [Licensing Fees and Eligibility Requirements](#)

What if I once had a Massachusetts full license, but I retired or allowed my license to expire? Can I reapply for a license?

Yes. You would use either of the following license applications, depending on your circumstances:

Lapsed License: A lapsed license application is for a physician who was issued a Massachusetts full license that expired for nonrenewal. If the physician has not engaged in the clinical practice of medicine for two years or more and intends to return to a practice of medicine that will include direct or indirect patient care, the Board may require that the physician demonstrate current clinical competency prior to reviving the license.

Contact the Division of Law and Policy if the full license was revoked or suspended by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine. The fee is \$700.00.

Return from Retirement: A physician who was licensed in Massachusetts and retired from the practice of medicine may submit an application to reactivate his/her license. The fee is \$700.00. If the physician has been out of practice for less than two years, he or she may file a Request for a Change of License status. If the physician has not engaged in the clinical practice of medicine for two years or more and intends to return to a practice of medicine that will include direct or indirect patient care, the Board may require that the physician demonstrate current clinical competency prior to reviving the license.

I am applying for a license in another state, how do I request a verification of my previous or current Massachusetts license?

A "[License Verification Request Form](#)" is available on the Board's website. Please follow the instructions on the form.

I am currently licensed in other states, does Massachusetts have reciprocity?

No, Massachusetts does not have reciprocity; you must apply for a full license. Please complete the full license application online through the Board's website. Applicants must complete both the Massachusetts Full License Application online AND have a completed FCVS Physician Profile which contains primary source verification of all core credentials, including medical education, (including ECFMG Certification, if applicable), postgraduate training, and examination scores. Additional documentation may be required to complete a full license application.

What are the requirements in Massachusetts for writing a prescription?

In order to practice medicine in Massachusetts, which includes writing prescriptions, a physician must be licensed in Massachusetts and have a registration certificate from the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and a Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration (MCSR) number from the Massachusetts Department of

Public Health (DPH). For more information, please see Policy 15-05: Prescribing Practices Policy and Guidelines (Adopted October 8, 2015; Amended January 14, 2021) on the Board's website.

Does Massachusetts have a special license for telemedicine?

No, you must apply for a full license.

How can I get a copy of my initial full license application for credentialing?

If you submitted an electronic initial full license application, you may download a copy of your initial application from the Board's online licensing system. If you need further assistance, you may also call the Call Center at (781)-876-8230

If you submitted a paper initial full license application, you must send a letter to the Board and enclose a check for \$5.00 made payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Please mail your request and the check to the Board of Registration in Medicine, 178 Albion Street, Suite 330, ATTN: Public Information, Wakefield, Massachusetts 01880.

How can I get a copy of my most recent full license renewal application?

You may download a copy of your most recent renewal application from the Board's online renewal system. If you need further assistance, you may also call the Call Center at (781)-876-8230

I am going to be a camp doctor in Massachusetts for a few weeks, what type of licensure is required?

You must apply for a full license.

How do I obtain an application for a full medical license?

You can apply for a full license online through the Board's website and follow the instructions. <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-my-physician-full-license>

How long does it take to process a full license application?

The average length of time for processing a full license may vary; however, the average processing time for electronically submitted applications is approximately 4 to 6 weeks. Applications that have malpractice, competency or legal issues will require more time to process. Following approval of your application for licensure by the Board, your wallet card will be emailed to you. You may also download a pdf of your wallet card through the Board's online licensing system. You will be required to send a copy of your Massachusetts license to the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) (www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov) and to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Controlled Substance Registration (Massachusetts Controlled Substances Registration | Mass.gov). In order to obtain a state-controlled substance certificate you may contact the DEA at 1-800-882-9539 or the Department of Public Health MCSR at (617) 973-0949.

I am licensed in another state and am under a probation agreement with that state's medical board. Will this affect my application for a Massachusetts license?

Yes. It is the practice of the Licensing Committee to defer action on applications from individuals with current probation agreements in another state, until that state's licensing board has terminated the probation.

I am licensed in another state where I completed a probation agreement. May I apply for a Massachusetts license?

Yes. Your application should include verification from the other state's medical board that your probation has successfully terminated, and any other materials requested by Board staff.

When do I have to renew my full license?

Renewal of your full medical license will occur on your first birth date after the license issuance date, unless your birthday falls within ninety (90) days of obtaining initial license. If your first birth date after the issuance date falls within this time frame, you will not be required to renew your license until the following birth date. Renewals thereafter will be on a two-year birth date cycle.

Can I apply for a temporary license while my full license is in process?

In order to ensure an adequate supply of physicians to staff hospitals, and to eliminate any administrative delays for physicians who qualify for licensure, the Board of Registration in Medicine issued *Policy on Provisionally Issued Full Licenses for Qualified Applicants 2023-03*. Pursuant to [Policy 2023-03](#), the Board will provisionally issue a full license to a qualifying full license applicant, while the Board completes the administrative review of the physician's full license application. A request for provisionally issued full license must be made by a Massachusetts healthcare facility to either the Executive Director or the Director of Licensing. Please contact the Board of Registration in Medicine at 781-876-8230 should you have any questions.

What is the difference between active, inactive and retired status?

- **Active Status:** An active licensee may practice medicine and may prescribe medications. An active licensee must complete the Board's Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements. In addition, an active licensee engaged in direct or indirect patient care, must maintain mandatory medical malpractice insurance coverage in the minimum amount of \$100,000/\$300,000.

- Inactive License: An inactive licensee may not practice medicine or prescribe or provide direct or indirect patient care. A licensee who is inactive is exempt from the continuing medical education requirements and malpractice liability insurance. A physician may change from inactive to active status by completing the Active Status Request Form that is available on the Board's website.
- Retired Status: A retired licensee may not practice medicine or prescribe or provide direct or indirect patient care. When you no longer wish to practice medicine in Massachusetts, you may apply for a retired status. When considering retirement, the licensee may contact the Massachusetts Medical Society's legal department to request their pamphlet titled "Issues for the Retiring Physician." A retirement form is available on the Board's website.

How many Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit hours are required to renew my license?

[Policy 2017-05 A CME Pilot Program](#) is currently in effect.

[Final Amended Guidelines for Fulfilling the CME and Education Trainings Requirements](#) (Adopted July 19, 2018, Amended Dec. 15, 2022)

[BORIM CME Requirements](#) (.pdf)

[BORIM CME Requirements](#) (.docx)

[Available Courses on Implicit Bias in Healthcare](#)

What is the difference between Category 1 and Category 2 study?

Category 1 programs are sponsored or jointly sponsored by an institution or organization accredited to offer American Medical Association Category 1 credit for CME activities.

Category 2 consists of study in the following areas:

- Attendance at lectures and seminars on medical subjects not accredited for Category 1.
- Preparation and publication of articles, books and exhibits relating to medicine.
- Self-instruction, such as reading medical literature, use of audio-visual materials or computer-assisted instruction.
- Medical consultation consisting of planned instruction from a consultant for not less than one hour (ordinary case consultation does not qualify for Category 1 or 2 credit).
- Participation in patient care review, including peer review, case conferences such as morbidity and mortality grand rounds, chart audits, and service on medical staff committees for tissue review, infections, pharmacy, etc., and hospital committees that oversee risk management, quality assurance and patient care assessment.
- Self-assessment. Physicians may earn credit for time spent taking self-assessment examinations not eligible for Category 1 credit.

What is “risk management study”?

Risk management study must include instruction in medical malpractice prevention, such as risk identification, patient safety and loss prevention, and may include instruction in any of the following areas:

- Medical ethics
- Quality assurance
- Medical-legal issues
- Patient relations
- Utilization review that directly relates to quality assurance
- Non-economic aspects of practice management

- Electronic health records
- End-of-life care issues
- Opioid and Pain Management

Can excess CME credits earned during one license renewal period be “saved” and used during a subsequent period?

No, 50 CME credits must be earned during each license renewal cycle.

Do I send documentation of CME credits with the license renewal form?

You do not submit documentation of CME credits with your renewal form. Keep your own records, as the Board expects you to be able to document CME credits.

I have not completed the Board’s CME requirements for renewal of my license. How can I apply for a CME waiver?

A physician who cannot meet the CME requirements may apply for a waiver no later than 30 days prior to the renewal date. The waiver request must include a written explanation of the reason for failing to complete the CME requirements, a listing of the CME credit hours earned and a plan for completing the CME requirements. The Board may grant a waiver of the CME requirement for prolonged illness of the licensee and inaccessibility or unavailability of CME programs. Please contact the Board of Registration in Medicine at 781-876-8230 to obtain a CME Waiver Request form.

DISCLAIMER

This information is provided for the benefit of license applicants and licensees and is subject to change. You may refer to the Board’s regulations, 243 CMR 2.00, for more information.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Pursuant 243 CMR 2.02 (2) (i) licensees that engage in direct or indirect patient care must maintain medical malpractice insurance. Licensees that do not engage in direct or indirect patient care or whose patient care in the Commonwealth is limited to professional service rendered at or on behalf of federal, state, county or municipal health care facilities are not subject to medical malpractice insurance requirements.

[2] ACGME is an acronym for Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. AOA means the American Osteopathic Association.

[3] In the case of non-accredited subspecialty clinical fellowship programs, the Board may accept postgraduate training in a hospital that has an ACGME or AOA or accredited Canadian postgraduate training program in the parent specialty.