COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN MEDICINE

POLICY 24-02

**PHYSICIAN REENTRY PLAN**[[1]](#footnote-1)

March 14, 2024

***Physician Reentry***: “a return to clinical practice in the discipline in which one has been trained or certified following an extended period of clinical inactivity not resulting from discipline or impairment.” *243 CMR 2.01(4).*

When an applicant for an initial full license,[[2]](#footnote-2) a voluntary license, a change of status or a lapsed license has ceased the practice of medicine for a period of 24 or more consecutive months immediately preceding the date of the application, the applicant shall be required to demonstrate current clinical competency. If the applicant cannot establish current clinical competency, the applicant may be required to complete a physician reentry plan to the satisfaction of the Licensing Committee (LC) or the Board.

**Establishing Current Clinical Competency**

The applicant may demonstrate current clinical competency in the following ways within the 24 months immediately preceding the date of the application, by engaging in one or more of the following:

* Taking 100 hours of practice-relevant Continuing Medical Education courses or trainings beyond those required for licensure;
* Passing the Special Purpose Examination (SPEX) or the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Variable-Purpose Examination (COMVEX);
* Being certified or recertified by a specialty board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties or the American Osteopathic Association;
* Completing the American Medical Association’s Maintenance of Licensure program;
* Completing a fellowship, a mini-residency or similar extensive training course;
* Recent, successful completion of an Ongoing Physician Performance Evaluation (OPPE) or a Focused Physician Performance Evaluation (FPPE);
* Participating in activities during the period of inactive clinical practice that, to the satisfaction of the Licensing Committee or the Board, develop or enhance clinical competency.

The initial full applicant may be required to appear before the LC or the Board for a personal interview to discuss his/her current clinical competency and/or a reentry plan.

A determination of current clinical competency shall be made by the Licensing Committee and/or the Board. When current clinical competency is established, and the applicant has met all other statutory and regulatory licensure requirements, the Board may issue the applicant a full license in Massachusetts.

**The Physician Reentry Plan**

If the Licensing Committee or the Board determines that the initial full applicant has not demonstrated sufficient current clinical competency, the applicant will be required to participate in a physician reentry plan. A reentry plan may last from 1 month to 12 months.

The goal of the physician reentry plan is to protect patient safety by ensuring that all licensees possess an up-to-date educational background and have a depth of experience in clinical practice.

In evaluating the length and scope of the reentry plan, the Licensing Committee and/or the Board shall consider the following factors:

* How long has the applicant been out of practice?
* What was the reason for the interruption in practice?
* What is the applicant’s plan for practicing in Massachusetts?
* What skills are required in the intended area of practice?
* How much change has occurred in the area of practice during the period of inactivity?
* How many years of graduate medical education does the applicant have and when did it occur?
* Other factors that the Board or the LC may consider significant.

The applicant shall meet with the Licensing Committee (LC) or the Board at such dates, times and places as directed by the LC or Board. The applicant may be represented by legal counsel.

Reentry Plan as Part of an Onboarding Program

The applicant who chooses to participate in an employer-based reentry plan shall identify a physician who is willing to mentor them. The Physician/Mentor shall be approved by the LC or the Board, shall sign the Reentry Agreement and shall make a monthly progress report to the LC or the Board. The Physician/Mentor shall immediately notify the LC or the Board if the applicant is not performing satisfactorily and in accordance with the physician reentry plan.

Reentry Plan as a Formal Reentry Program

Alternatively, the applicant may choose to participate in a formal physician reentry program. Here is a list of links to some of the available programs. This list is provided for information purposes and is not an endorsement by the Board.

* [**Drexel University Physician Refresher Reentry Program**](https://drexel.edu/medicine/academics/continuing-education/physician-refresher-re-entry-program/)
* [**UC San Diego School of Medicine Faculty, Physician Retraining & Reentry**](https://prrprogram.com/)
* [**The Center for Personalized Education for Physicians (CPEP) Reentry to Clinical Practice Program**](http://www.cpepdoc.org/assessment-reentry-and-education-plans-2/reentry-to-clinical-practice/)
* [**KSTAR/UTMB Health Mini-Residency Program**](https://www.architexas.org/programs/kstar-physician/utmb-mini-residency.html)
* [**Lifeguard Re-Entry/Re-Instatement**](https://www.foundationpamedsoc.org/docs/librariesprovider3/foundation-documents/re-entry_re-instatement_2019.pdf?sfvrsn=db10f77d_3#:~:text=The%20LifeGuard%20Re-entry%20%2FRe-instatement%20program%20provides%20a%20pathway,clinical%20skills%20and%20readiness%20to%20re-enter%20the%20workforce)

**The Reentry Agreement**

The Physician Reentry Agreement, which includes the Physician Reentry Plan, is drafted by the applicant. It shall be signed by the applicant, the physician mentor and a representative from the LC or the Board. The reentry agreement is binding on all the parties.

When the Physician Reentry Agreement has been signed by all the parties, and the applicant has met all other statutory and regulatory licensure requirements, the Board shall issue the applicant a license and shall require that the applicant successfully complete the terms of the Reentry Agreement.

The Physician Reentry Agreement is an educational plan and is not punitive or disciplinary in nature. The Board does not report the reentry agreement to the National Practitioner Data Bank.

When the applicant has successfully completed his/her reentry plan, the Applicant shall petition the LC or the Board to terminate the plan, including in the petition the Physician Mentor’s monthly reports and recommendations, if any.

If the applicant does not satisfactorily complete the reentry plan, or if the applicant practices outside the scope of the reentry plan, as determined by the Board, this conduct could constitute misconduct in the practice of medicine and could warrant referral to the Enforcement Division or it could provide grounds for the Board to institute a summary suspension of the license pursuant to 243 CMR 1.03(11).

1. This policy is intended to complement Policy 03-03, Policy on Lapsed License Applications, and Board regulation 243 CMR 2.06(6)(c), which applies to “renewing, reviving, reinstating or change of status” applicants. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This policy applies to Volunteer License applicants but not to Administrative License applicants, who do not practice clinical medicine. *See* 243 CMR 2.02(11 and 12). In addition, this policy applies to an applicant for a Change of License Status from either a Volunteer or an Administrative License to a Full License, who has not practiced clinical medicine for 24 consecutive months or more. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)