

Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing



Celebrating the Past, Present and Future of Nursing

Historical Highlights

The following list demonstrates many significant events for nurses in Massachusetts. It is not meant to be inclusive of all historical events.

- 1872: • New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston admits first nursing class
- 1873: • Boston Training School for Nurses opens in Boston
 - New England Hospital for Women and Children graduates “America’s First Trained Nurse”, Linda Richards
- 1879: • Mary Eliza Mahoney, America’s first black nurse graduates from the New England Hospital for Women and Children
- 1886: • Visiting Nurses Association of Boston established
 - Psychiatric Nurse training begins at McLean Hospital
- 1904: • An Act to Regulate the Practice of Professional Nursing of the Sick filed with Massachusetts State Legislature
- 1910: • The Massachusetts Board of Registration is created by law effective October, 1910; composition includes three nurses, the secretary of the Board of Registration in Medicine and the physician superintendent of a hospital training school for nurses. Law authorizes licensure by examination of Registered Nurses only. To qualify, applicant must be at least 21 years of age and of good moral character. Fee is \$5.00. Licensure examination waived for Massachusetts residents who apply for licensure within one year and who can prove he or she has engaged for five years in competent care of the sick or who has such experience in a hospital or training school. Law is first MA “Nurse Practice Act.”
- 1911: • First State Board Examination for Registered Nurses
 - Mary Riddle issued first license as Registered Nurse on November 15, 1911 and becomes first chairperson of Board
- 1917: • The Household Nursing School for Attendants (Shepard-Gill School of Practical Nursing of the Mass General Hospital) established
- 1919: • Massachusetts Nurse Practice Act amended to provide registration of

- graduates of Nursing schools
- First renewal law for RN established (cost is 50 cents)
- 1938: • Compulsory registration for graduates of "attendant" school nurses, Licensed Attendants (LA), (later known as Licensed Practical Nurse or LPN)
- 1940: • Licensed Attendant (LA) employment in hospitals to fill shortage of RNs created by WWII
- 1941: • Renewal fee for LA and RN increased to \$1.00
- Age requirement for RN is 21 and LA is 20
- Citizenship requirement for RN and LA registration
- 1942: • First meeting of the Licensed Attendants Association (later known as LPNMI)
- 1943: • Age requirement for licensure reduced to 20 for RN and 19 for LA "for duration of war"
- 1947: • Legislative title change from Licensed Attendant to Licensed Attendant Nurse (LAN)
- 1948: • First bachelor's degree program in nursing established at Boston University
- Age requirement for licensure reduced to 20 for RN
- 1950: • Nurses recruited for Service in Korea
- 1951: • Age requirement for licensure reduced to 19 for LAN
- 1952: • Regulations at 244 CMR 2.00: *Licensure Requirements reflective of General Rules and Regulations of the Board of Registration in Nursing* established (repealed on October 13, 2000¹)
- Regulations at 244 CMR 3.00: *Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse* established
- 1953: • Legislative title change from Licensed Attendant Nurse to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- 1957: • Regulations at 244 CMR 6.00: *Approval and Conduct of Nursing Education Programs and the General Conduct Thereof* codified; Board approval of Nursing Education Programs initiated November 13, 1957
- 1958: • Mandatory licensure for Registered and Licensed Practical Nurses
- 1960: • First LPN appointment to the Board of Registration in Nursing
- 1964: • Legislative act allowing nurses employed in the private sector to engage in collective bargaining activities
- Age requirement for licensure omitted
- 1975: • Legislation authorizing Nurses in the Expanded Role enacted
- 1977: • Legislation allowing Nurse Midwives to practice in MA signed
- Legislation mandating completion of continuing education credits as requirement for license renewal signed

¹ Timeline does not include revisions to the Board of Registration in Nursing regulations made prior to 1994

- 1978: • Establishment of all nurse Board
- 1980: • Regulations at 244 CMR 4.00: *Massachusetts Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing in the Expanded Role* codified effective January 18, 1980
 - Regulations at 244 CMR 5.00: *Continuing Education* codified effective March 6, 1980
- 1983: • Legislation allowing Nurse Practitioners (NP) to prescribe in Long Term Care enacted
 - National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX®) replaces State Boards which had been administered since 1950
- 1985: • Legislation mandating Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialists and Nurse Midwives third party reimbursement enacted
- 1986: • Regulations at 244 CMR 7.00: *Action on Complaints* codified effective June 20, 1986
- 1989: • Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP) established to assist nurses whose practice has been impaired by substance abuse disorders which can serve as a voluntary alternative to discipline
- 1990: • Legislation allowing Midwives to prescribe enacted
- 1991: • Special Commission on Nursing established by legislature
- 1992: • Legislation allowing NPs and the Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist to prescribe without limitation to setting enacted
- 1994: • Number of Board members increased to 13 to include a consumer member
 - General Law c. 112, s. 80B amended to revise RN and LPN practice description
 - Advance practice nursing regulations revised mandating Board authorization prior to practice
 - National Council Licensure Exam - Computer Adaptive Testing implemented
- 1995: • Law enacted allowing RN Pronouncement in long term care and hospice
- 1998: • Board issues advisory ruling related to delegation and supervision of unlicensed persons
- 1999: • Federal Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) established to combat fraud and abuse in healthcare insurance and delivery
- 2000: • Board acts on complaints issued against 18 nurses involved in medication overdosing, generates substantial debate and ignites the national patient safety movement focusing on medical error prevention
 - Regulations at 244 CMR 9.00: *Standards of Conduct* codified effective October 13, 2000
- 2001: • Board issues "Duty to Report" guidance
- 2002: • The Board of Registration in Nursing is administratively reassigned from the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation to Department of Public Health effective January 1, 2003

- 2006: • Inaugural edition of Board electronic newsletter is posted on Board website
- 2007: • Board becomes 2007 recipient of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Regulatory Achievement Award
- 2009: • Law enacted recognizing nurse practitioners as primary care providers
- 2010: • Board celebrates 100th anniversary by sponsoring educational event
- Board receives 2010 Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses President's Award
- Board receives proclamation by Governor and State Legislators in honor of the Board's centennial
- Board initiates electronic Nurse Workforce Survey
- Law enacted, authorizing Nurse Anesthetists to prescribe in the perioperative area
- 2011: • Regulations at 244 CMR 4.00: *Massachusetts Regulations Governing the Practice of Nursing in the Expanded Role* revised to reflect nurse anesthetist prescribing
- Governor issues a Proclamation that November 13-19th is Nurse Practitioner Week; first time such a proclamation has been issued in Massachusetts
- 2012: • Law amended, removing requirement for physician supervision, including guidelines, for Nurse Midwife prescriptive practice
- Law amended, requiring APRN to enroll in the Medical Assistance Program
- Law enacted, allowing a Nurse Practitioner to sign, certify, stamp, verify and endorse forms that previously required a physician signature
- 2014 • Final revisions to regulations at 244 CMR 4.00: *Massachusetts Regulations Governing Advanced Practice Nursing* approved by Board for promulgation on July 9, 2014 to be effective August 1, 2014