



# Ohio Board of Nursing

[www.nursing.ohio.gov](http://www.nursing.ohio.gov)

17 S. High Street, Suite 660 • Columbus, Ohio 43215-3466 • 614-466-3947

## Communication to Program Administrators March 25, 2020

The Ohio Board of Nursing is sending this communication to reiterate information included in the previous communications, and to emphasize information that may answer questions.

- The Ohio Board of Nursing began work on a plan to address COVID-19 two weeks ago. We issued several statements both by email, social media and via the website. Through these means we are able to communicate consistently with all Programs. If you have specific questions after reading the guidance information/documents, please email [education@nursing.ohio.gov](mailto:education@nursing.ohio.gov).
- The Board will not penalize programs in the future based on your decisions to adapt your nursing education curriculum to address these unprecedented times. No law or administrative rule change is needed for the Board to do this.
- A primary issue you have identified is student program completion, which is being addressed. The Board has stated publicly that it will not penalize nursing programs for implementing creative solutions. Additional guidance on this was sent to Program Administrators yesterday regarding teaching options within the current law and rules. These teaching options include the use of telehealth patient engagement as clinical experiences.
  - **Nursing care through telehealth can be used as clinical experiences:** Rule 4723-5-01(F), OAC. The definition of “clinical experience” permits nursing student’s provision of nursing care to patients via telehealth.
  - **Virtual simulation experiences may be used as laboratory experiences:** Rule 4723-5-01(Y), OAC, defines patient simulation and does not prohibit the use of “virtual” simulated experiences.
- The Board has been working with others in state government to identify what adaptations can be done by law and/or rule changes. For actions that require law changes, the Board has completed and submitted recommendations in this regard, including student program completion.
- Increasing the nursing workforce was addressed immediately, at the same time as setting up Board staff to work remotely. The Board has been issuing temporary licenses **within 1 business day**. Further, under current Ohio law, out-of-state licensed nurses can work in Ohio during a declared emergency without obtaining a license in Ohio. Detailed information is posted on the Board’s website for your reference regarding mobility of licensure.
- The Board is reviewing other state board of nursing actions, however, in many instances the other state actions are not applicable to Ohio because Ohio does not have the same regulations. For example, some states’ laws establish a minimum number of clinical hours that students are to complete, and the state is waiving those minimum hours. Ohio does not establish a minimum number of clinical hours, rather it is determined by programs’ curriculum and the program has flexibility within a course to move hours between clinical and laboratory experiences. The Board is continuing to review its existing regulations and applying them to specific concerns raised.

**As you are aware, this is a fluid situation and additional action to increase the nursing workforce may occur. The Board can offer guidance on many topics and clarify the current law and rules, but there are some questions that cannot be answered at this time - this is an evolving situation and information may be available in the future based on the declared emergency.**