



WASHINGTON PHYSICIAN LICENSURE STATUTE

Title 18. Businesses and Professions Chapter 71. Physicians

71.002 Purpose

It is the purpose of the [medical quality assurance commission](#) to regulate the competency and quality of professional health care providers under its jurisdiction by establishing, monitoring, and enforcing qualifications for licensing, consistent standards of practice, continuing competency mechanisms, and discipline. Rules, policies, and procedures developed by the commission must promote the delivery of quality health care to the residents of the state of Washington.

71.010. Definitions.

The following terms used in this chapter shall have the meanings set forth in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

- (1) "Commission" means the [Washington state medical quality assurance commission](#).
- (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.
- (3) "Resident physician" means an individual who has graduated from a school of medicine which meets the requirements set forth in [RCW 18.71.055](#) and is serving a period of postgraduate clinical medical training sponsored by a college or university in this state or by a hospital accredited by this state. For purposes of this chapter, the term shall include individuals designated as intern or medical fellow.
- (4) "Emergency medical care" or "emergency medical service" has the same meaning as in [chapter 18.73 RCW](#).



71.011. Definition of practice of medicine—

Engaging in practice of chiropractic prohibited, when

A person is practicing medicine if he does one or more of the following:

- (1) Offers or undertakes to diagnose, cure, advise or prescribe for any human disease, ailment, injury, infirmity, deformity, pain or other condition, physical or mental, real or imaginary, by any means or instrumentality;
- (2) Administers or prescribes drugs or medicinal preparations to be used by any other person;
- (3) Severs or penetrates the tissues of human beings;
- (4) Uses on cards, books, papers, signs or other written or printed means of giving information to the public, in the conduct of any occupation or profession pertaining to the diagnosis or treatment of human disease or conditions the designation “doctor of medicine”, “physician”, “surgeon”, “m.d.” or any combination thereof unless such designation additionally contains the description of another branch of the healing arts for which a person has a license: PROVIDED HOWEVER, That a person licensed under this chapter shall not engage in the practice of chiropractic as defined in [RCW 18.25.005](#).

71.021. License Required.

No person may practice or represent himself or herself as practicing medicine without first having a valid license to do so.

71.030. Exemptions.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to apply to or interfere in any way with the practice of religion or any kind of treatment by prayer; nor shall anything in this chapter be construed to prohibit:

- (1) The furnishing of medical assistance in cases of emergency requiring immediate attention;
- (2) The domestic administration of family remedies;



- (3) The administration of oral medication of any nature to students by public school district employees or private elementary or secondary school employees as provided for in [chapter 28A.210 RCW](#);
- (4) The practice of dentistry, osteopathic medicine and surgery, nursing, chiropractic, podiatric medicine and surgery, optometry, naturopathy, or any other healing art licensed under the methods or means permitted by such license;
- (5) The practice of medicine in this state by any commissioned medical officer serving in the armed forces of the United States or public health service or any medical officer on duty with the United States veterans administration while such medical officer is engaged in the performance of the duties prescribed for him or her by the laws and regulations of the United States;
- (6) The practice of medicine by any practitioner licensed by another state or territory in which he or she resides, provided that such practitioner shall not open an office or appoint a place of meeting patients or receiving calls within this state;
- (7) The practice of medicine by a person who is a regular student in a school of medicine approved and accredited by the commission, however, the performance of such services be only pursuant to a regular course of instruction or assignments from his or her instructor, or that such services are performed only under the supervision and control of a person licensed pursuant to this chapter;
- (8) The practice of medicine by a person serving a period of postgraduate medical training in a program of clinical medical training sponsored by a college or university in this state or by a hospital accredited in this state, however, the performance of such services shall be only pursuant to his or her duties as a trainee;
- (9) The practice of medicine by a person who is regularly enrolled in a physician assistant program approved by the commission, however, the performance of such services shall be only pursuant to a regular course of instruction in said program and such services are performed only under the supervision and control of a person licensed pursuant to this chapter;



(10) The practice of medicine by a licensed physician assistant which practice is performed under the supervision and control of a physician licensed pursuant to this chapter;

(11) The practice of medicine, in any part of this state which shares a common border with Canada and which is surrounded on three sides by water, by a physician licensed to practice medicine and surgery in Canada or any province or territory thereof;

(12) The administration of nondental anesthesia by a dentist who has completed a residency in anesthesiology at a school of medicine approved by the commission, however, a dentist allowed to administer nondental anesthesia shall do so only under authorization of the patient's attending surgeon, obstetrician, or psychiatrist, and the commission has jurisdiction to discipline a dentist practicing under this exemption and enjoin or suspend such dentist from the practice of nondental anesthesia according to this chapter and chapter [18.130 RCW](#);

(13) Emergency lifesaving service rendered by a physician's trained emergency medical service intermediate life support technician and paramedic, as defined in [RCW 18.71.200](#), if the emergency lifesaving service is rendered under the responsible supervision and control of a licensed physician;

(14) The provision of clean, intermittent bladder catheterization for students by public school district employees or private school employees as provided for in [RCW 18.79.290](#) and [28A.210.280](#).

71.040. Application—Fee

Every applicant for a license to practice medicine and surgery shall pay a fee determined by the secretary as provided in [RCW 43.70.250](#).

71.050. Application--Eligibility requirements--United States and Canadian graduates

(1) Each applicant who has graduated from a school of medicine located in any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Dominion of Canada, shall file an application for licensure with the commission on a form prepared by the secretary with the approval of the commission. Each applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the commission of the following:



- (a) That the applicant has attended and graduated from a school of medicine approved by the commission;
- (b) That the applicant has completed two years of postgraduate medical training in a program acceptable to the commission, provided that applicants graduating before July 28, 1985, may complete only one year of postgraduate medical training;
- (c) That the applicant is of good moral character; and
- (d) That the applicant is physically and mentally capable of safely carrying on the practice of medicine. The commission may require any applicant to submit to such examination or examinations as it deems necessary to determine an applicant's physical and/or mental capability to safely practice medicine.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the commission from requiring such additional information from applicants as it deems necessary. The issuance and denial of licenses are subject to chapter [18.130 RCW, the Uniform Disciplinary Act](#).

71.050. Application--Eligibility requirements-- Foreign graduates.

Applicants for licensure to practice medicine who have graduated from a school of medicine located outside of the states, territories, and possessions of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Dominion of Canada, shall file an application for licensure with the commission on a form prepared by the secretary with the approval of the commission. Each applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the commission of the following:

- (1) That he or she has completed in a school of medicine a resident course of professional instruction equivalent to that required in this chapter for applicants generally;
- (2) That he or she meets all the requirements which must be met by graduates of the United States and Canadian school of medicine except that he or she need not have graduated from a school of medicine approved by the commission;
- (3) That he or she has satisfactorily passed the examination given by the educational council for foreign medical graduates or has met the requirements in lieu thereof as set forth in rules adopted by the commission.



(4) That he or she has the ability to read, write, speak, understand, and be understood in the English language.

71.070. Examination—Record

With the exception of those applicants granted licensure through the provisions of [RCW 18.71.090](#) or [18.71.095](#), applicants for licensure must successfully complete an examination administered by the commission to determine their professional qualifications. The commission shall prepare and give, or approve the preparation and giving of, an examination which shall cover those general subjects and topics, a knowledge of which is commonly and generally required of candidates for the degree of doctor of medicine conferred by approved colleges or schools of medicine in the United States. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the commission has the sole responsibility for determining the proficiency of applicants under this chapter, and, in so doing, may waive any prerequisite to licensure not set forth in this chapter.

The commission may by rule establish the passing grade for the examination.

Examination results shall be part of the records of the commission and shall be permanently kept with the applicant's file.

71.090. License without examination--Reciprocity—

National board examinees—Fee

Any applicant who meets the requirements of [RCW 18.71.050](#) and has been licensed under the laws of another state, territory, or possession of the United States, or of any province of Canada, or an applicant who has satisfactorily passed examinations given by the [national board of medical examiners](#) may, in the discretion of the commission, be granted a license without examination on the payment of the fees required by this chapter: PROVIDED, That the applicant must file with the commission a copy of the license certified by the proper authorities of the issuing state to be a full, true copy thereof, and must show that the standards, eligibility requirements, and examinations of that state are at least equal in all respects to those of this state.

71.095. Limited licenses

The commission may, without examination, issue a limited license to persons who possess the qualifications set forth herein:



(1) The commission may, upon the written request of the secretary of the department of social and health services or the secretary of corrections, issue a limited license to practice medicine in this state to persons who have been accepted for employment by the [department of social and health services](#) or the [department of corrections](#) as physicians; who are licensed to practice medicine in another state of the United States or in the country of Canada or any province or territory thereof; and who meet all of the qualifications for licensure set forth in [RCW 18.71.050](#).

Such license shall permit the holder thereof to practice medicine only in connection with patients, residents, or inmates of the state institutions under the control and supervision of the secretary of the department of social and health services or the department of corrections.

(2) The commission may issue a limited license to practice medicine in this state to persons who have been accepted for employment by a county or city health department as physicians; who are licensed to practice medicine in another state of the United States or in the country of Canada or any province or territory thereof; and who meet all of the qualifications for licensure set forth in [RCW 18.71.050](#).

Such license shall permit the holder thereof to practice medicine only in connection with his or her duties in employment with the city or county health department.

(3) Upon receipt of a completed application showing that the applicant meets all of the requirements for licensure set forth in [RCW 18.71.050](#) except for completion of two years of postgraduate medical training, and that the applicant has been appointed as a resident physician in a program of postgraduate clinical training in this state approved by the commission, the commission may issue a limited license to a resident physician. Such license shall permit the resident physician to practice medicine only in connection with his or her duties as a resident physician and shall not authorize the physician to engage in any other form of practice. Each resident physician shall practice medicine only under the supervision and control of a physician licensed in this state, but such supervision and control shall not be construed to necessarily require the personal presence of the supervising physician at the place where services are rendered.

(4)(a) Upon nomination by the dean of the [school of medicine at the University of Washington](#) or the chief executive officer of a hospital or other appropriate health care facility licensed in the state of Washington, the commission may issue a limited license to a physician applicant invited to serve as a teaching-research member of the



institution's instructional staff if the sponsoring institution and the applicant give evidence that he or she has graduated from a recognized medical school and has been licensed or otherwise privileged to practice medicine at his or her location of origin. Such license shall permit the recipient to practice medicine only within the confines of the instructional program specified in the application and shall terminate whenever the holder ceases to be involved in that program, or at the end of one year, whichever is earlier. Upon request of the applicant and the institutional authority, the license may be renewed.

(b) Upon nomination by the dean of the school of medicine of the University of Washington or the chief executive officer of any hospital or appropriate health care facility licensed in the state of Washington, the commission may issue a limited license to an applicant selected by the sponsoring institution to be enrolled in one of its designated departmental or divisional fellowship programs provided that the applicant shall have graduated from a recognized medical school and has been granted a license or other appropriate certificate to practice medicine in the location of the applicant's origin. Such license shall permit the holder only to practice medicine within the confines of the fellowship program to which he or she has been appointed and, upon the request of the applicant and the sponsoring institution, the license may be renewed by the commission for no more than a total of two years.

All persons licensed under this section shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the commission to the same extent as other members of the medical profession, in accordance with this chapter and chapter [18.130 RCW](#).

Persons applying for licensure and renewing licenses pursuant to this section shall comply with administrative procedures, administrative requirements, and fees determined as provided in [RCW 43.70.250](#) and [43.70.280](#). Any person who obtains a limited license pursuant to this section may apply for licensure under this chapter, but shall submit a new application form and comply with all other licensing requirements of this chapter.