



ALABAMA BOARD OF NURSING

# INSIGHTS

A Message from the Executive Officer

## The NLC Goes Live in Alabama on January 1

Beginning January 1, 2020, the state of Alabama will officially become a party to the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). This is a very exciting time for Alabama nurses, as we continue the hard work of implementing the Compact in our state.

The transition to life as a Compact state will require a great deal of adjustment for licensees, employers, and the Board. However, in crafting the bill (Alabama Act No. 2019-102) that established the Compact in Alabama, the Board took extra care to ensure that nurses who do not wish to apply for multistate licenses under the NLC would experience minimal disruption. These nurses will be free to maintain their Alabama single state licenses, and the vast majority of processes, fees, etc. will change very minimally or not at all.

It is the nurses who choose to work across state lines on Compact licenses who will need to learn the various differences between multistate and single state licensure. From fingerprint background checks to understanding which states do and do not recognize multistate licenses, the ABN is here to help. We are establishing a dedicated NLC page on the ABN website, which will include all of the information and resources you need to understand the Compact, but our education program does not stop there.

As usual, the Board has taken a proactive approach to information sharing regarding the Compact. Continue to monitor social media and your email, as we will be sending a number of updates leading up to official implementation on January 1. Additionally, look out for a Compact Special Edition issue of ABN Insights, which will be coming in October. That issue will be loaded with information related to multistate licensure that you will not want to miss.

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## Reminder Regarding Communication from the ABN

Over the past several years, the ABN has made a concerted effort to more aggressively communicate with licensees, via newsletters, social media, and list serve emails. This effort has largely been successful, allowing us to share vital updates on changes in licensing processes, as well as many other functions of the Board.

However, there is always room for improvement, and we are asking all licensees to help us communicate better, by visiting My Profile on the ABN website, to ensure that your individual profile includes an email address that you check on a regular basis. This is the best way to make certain that you will not miss any important notifications from the Board.

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## Neonatal CRNP Protocol Consolidation

Earlier this year, the ABN and the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners (ABME) elected to eliminate the Neonatal Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) Specialty Protocol and consolidate all skills included in that protocol into the existing Neonatal CRNP Standard Protocol. Any skills that are not appropriate for a specific CRNP's practice can simply be excluded by the physician, in the process of completing the protocol.

For more information regarding collaborative practice management, please consult [A Physician's Guide to Collaborative Practice Management](#), on the CRNP Resources page of the ABN website, [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov).

## FTE Exemptions

The ABN recently created a form that allows any collaborating physician to request an exemption from the existing full-time equivalent (FTE) limit of four FTEs (160 hours), depending on the specific circumstances of the physician's practice. While the rules previously had allowed for the exemption request, this new form and process are a major step forward for patient care in Alabama. The [form](#) is available on the Board's CRNP and CNM Resources pages.

## Reminder Regarding Collaborative Practice Documentation

Current Board rules require that every CRNP or Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) file a Standard Protocol (SP) and a Quality Assurance (QA) Plan with the ABN for each collaboration in which he or she is involved. At present, all active CRNPs and CNMs are compliant with this requirement. However, it has come to the attention of Board staff that the ABME continues to receive a number of these documents from CRNPs and CNMs. The staff of the ABME has no process for maintaining these documents, so filing them with the ABME does not satisfy the nurse's obligation. Please take care in the future to ensure that your documents are filed only with the Board of Nursing.

Should you have questions regarding these or any other matters pertaining to advanced practice nursing, please feel free to contact us at [advancedpractice@abn.alabama.gov](mailto:advancedpractice@abn.alabama.gov).

## ABN Welcomes Gabriel Sapalaran, BSN, RN, to the Board

Last month, Governor Kay Ivey appointed Gabriel Sapalaran, BSN, RN, to fill an unexpired term on the Alabama Board of Nursing. Mr. Sapalaran is employed with the VA Hospital in Birmingham. He is a graduate of the University of the City of Manila in the Philippines, who currently is pursuing his Doctor of Nursing Practice degree. Mr. Sapalaran serves in a Nursing Practice position on the Board.



# LPN Renewal is Underway!

2019 LPN Renewal opened on Sunday, September 1 and ends at midnight on December 31. As we move forward this Fall, I wanted to remind all LPNs of a few issues and considerations:

## **Adequate CE**

If you do not have at least 24 hours of continuing education (CE) credit, you will not be allowed to renew. If you are short on hours, relieve the stress by accessing the dozens of free hours available on the ABN website.

## **2019 LPN Demographic Survey**

Once again, during this Renewal, we will ask every LPN to answer a series of voluntary demographic questions. Please take a few moments to complete this process. The LPN Demographic Survey is a rare opportunity for each of you to contribute to the future of healthcare in our state. The Demographic Survey will be used not only by the ABN in making regulatory decisions, but also by hundreds of employers throughout Alabama, as they make business and staffing judgments for the future. The Survey is entirely anonymous, and your personal information will never be shared.

## **Regulatory Questions**

As usual, during Renewal, all nurses are required to answer a series of regulatory questions relating to legal or disciplinary issues. Answering “yes” to any question will not necessarily keep you from renewing, but every “yes” requires internal staff review and can cause delays. Renewing as early as possible is the best way to get these issues behind you and avoid delays that could result in a lapse of your license.

## **CE Earning Period**

This year, the Board changed rules relating to the CE earning period, so that nurses who renew early will no longer have to wait until January 1 to earn CE toward 2021 Renewal. Under the new rules, you may begin earning CE for your next renewal the day after you renew. We encourage you to renew early and take advantage of the extra time.

## **Compact Concerns**

On January 1, 2020, Alabama will officially become a Compact state. With LPN Renewal closing at the end of December, a number of LPNs have inquired whether they will be required to pay the full renewal fee and the full \$200 fee for a multistate license after January 1. I am pleased to inform you that the Board has established a 6-month window at the beginning of 2020, which will allow LPNs who renew prior to January 1 to pay a reduced fee to upgrade their single state licenses to multistate licenses. This is another reason that it is important to renew on time. If your single state license lapses, you will have to pay even higher fees to reinstate and obtain a multistate license.

Again, renewing early is the best way to avoid any unforeseen delays that could affect your licensure status. In the meantime, if you have any questions relating to these or any other issues, please feel free to contact us at [abn@abn.alabama.gov](mailto:abn@abn.alabama.gov).

## ABN STAFF AVAILABLE TO SHARE INFORMATION REGARDING VDAP

The Voluntary Disciplinary Alternative Program (VDAP) promotes early identification, intervention, treatment, and rehabilitation of any nurse or applicant issued a valid temporary permit for licensure. VDAP is intended for an individual whose competence is found to be impaired or compromised because of the use or abuse of drugs, alcohol, controlled substances, chemicals, or other substances or as a result of a physical or mental condition rendering the person unable to meet the standards of the nursing profession. Since its inception, VDAP has assisted hundreds of professionals in Alabama to overcome their problems and return to safe and competent practice.

Programs like VDAP have taken on particular importance, in light of our nation's ongoing opioid crisis. Over the past several months, the ABN has been conducting a focused campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation in VDAP, and the results have been outstanding. However, we can always do more to help nurses in need and, above all, the patients they serve.

As we seek to spread the word and encourage every nurse to seek the help that he or she needs to continue providing patient care, VDAP staff are making themselves available to address facility staff, students and faculty of nursing education programs, and professional or civic associations. If you feel that this opportunity may be of benefit to your organization, please visit [www.abn.alabama.gov](http://www.abn.alabama.gov) and complete a [Speaker Request Form](#).

Further information regarding VDAP, including eligibility criteria and enrollment information, is available on our [VDAP page](#).



## ABN Earns National and International Recognition for Excellence in Regulation

Over the past five years, the members and staff of the Alabama Board of Nursing have worked tirelessly to improve processes and reduce barriers to practice for qualified nurses in our state. The fruits of this labor are numerous (elimination of the penalty for late renewal, extension of the continuing education earning period, passing the Compact, etc.), but it is always nice to earn recognition from our peers in regulatory practice. So, we are pleased to announce that two major regulatory organizations have chosen to award the ABN for our efforts.

In August, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) recognized the Alabama Board of Nursing with its 2019 Regulatory Achievement Award. This award is reserved for one member board of NCSBN that has made an identifiable, significant contribution to the mission and vision of NCSBN in promoting public policy related to the safe and effective practice of nursing in the interest of public welfare. ABN Executive Officer Peggy Sellers Benson, RN, MSHA, MSN, NE-BC, and several members of the Board were in Chicago to accept this high honor.

The second organization to recognize the ABN's hard work is the Council of Licensure, Education, and Regulation (CLEAR), which has selected Peggy Sellers Benson for the 2019 Regulatory Excellence Award. Peggy earned this award by demonstrating an outstanding contribution to the enhancement of occupational or professional regulation, regulatory processes, or consumer and public protection. Ms. Benson will receive the Regulatory Excellence Award later this month.