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More than 10K out-of-state health care workers approved to help N.J. fight the coronavirus

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More than 10,600 out-of-state health care workers now have temporary licenses to help New Jersey battle the coronavirus, officials announced Tuesday.

More than 400 retired doctors, nurses and others within New Jersey also reactivated licenses this month, officials said.

“This is an all hands on deck moment,” Gov. Phil Murphy said Tuesday at his daily briefing in Trenton. “We thank everyone who is stepping forward.”

Every new license “makes New Jersey better equipped to fight back against COVID-19,” state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said in a statement.

Officials previously made it easier for both out-of-state and retired health care workers to provide care in New Jersey.

Out-of-state licenses were granted to soldiers deployed with the National Guard and people offering telehealth from other parts of the country, Grewal’s office said. A total of 3,350 are doctors or physician assistants. A little less than 3,000 are nurses, more than 2,270 are mental health professionals, and 117 are respiratory specialists.

In addition, 270 recently retired nurses and more than 130 doctors or physician assistants signed up to return to work.

The experienced recruits will help ease “an unprecedented workload in overstretched health facilities,” Paul Rodríguez, acting Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, said in a statement.

New Jersey will soon launch a program to allow some doctors licensed in other countries to work domestically, Grewal’s office said. The state is also giving physician assistants and advanced practice nurses more leeway to work with less supervision, and relaxing limits on out-of-state medication prescriptions.

Recent retirees who apply to reactivate their licenses online should have an answer within one day, officials said.

The new and reactivated licenses will expire at the end of New Jersey’s state of emergency.