

# The Star-Ledger

**Just finished nursing school but no license yet? N.J. wants your help in coronavirus crisis.**

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Recent nursing school graduates can now earn emergency licenses before they pass their exams to help New Jersey fight the coronavirus, state officials announced Tuesday.

Physician assistants, pharmacists and respiratory care therapists may also apply online for free for the temporary emergency licenses. Anyone who applies within six months of graduating is eligible.

“Today’s action allows thousands of recent graduates to quickly join teams on the ground currently fighting COVID-19,” Gov. Phil Murphy said in a statement.

“We cannot afford to have otherwise qualified healthcare professionals sidelined,” state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal added in a statement.

Up to 1,000 recent graduates and about 3,000 people scheduled to graduate in the spring could be eligible, according to representatives for Murphy and Grewal.

Graduates of both registered professional nursing programs and practical nursing programs may apply, according to a press release. Workers will lose their emergency licenses if they fail their licensing exams.

Pharmacists must be trained in New Jersey to be eligible, but respiratory care therapists may graduate from out-of-state schools. Those therapists may also work under supervision in field hospitals, like the one recently opened in the Atlantic City Convention Center. Eligible nurses, physician assistants and pharmacists may only work in licensed acute care facilities, like traditional hospitals.

The licenses will automatically expire at the end of New Jersey’s state of emergency. If the consumer affairs division decides to end the program earlier, those with temporarily licenses will have 90 days to pass their tests and 120 days to earn standard licenses.

New Jersey has also been bolstered by more than 10,600 out-of-state health care workers who applied for temporary licenses, and more than 400 recently retired doctors, nurses and other residents who reactivated their licenses last month.