

Policy Statement Regarding 50 U.S.C. § 4025a, Portability and Recognition of Professional Licenses for Servicemembers and Their Spouses

The Division of Health Related Boards currently recognizes the covered license of a service member and/or the spouse of a servicemember upon application to the Board pursuant to 50 U.S.C. § 4025a regarding license portability. A person whose license is recognized under this federal law in Tennessee is considered a “covered licensee.” Recognition of a covered license permits a servicemember or the spouse of a servicemember to practice a dental profession in Tennessee based on holding a covered license. See 50 U.S.C. § 4025a(f)(1). However, federal law limits the scope of practice of a covered license to the scope of practice in the state of the new residence where the license is recognized. The federal law defines “license” as “any license, certificate, or other evidence of qualification that an individual is required to obtain before the individual may engage in, or represent himself or herself to be member of, a particular profession.” See 50 U.S.C. § 4025a(f)(2). Therefore, the Board of Dentistry finds that in order for a covered licensee to engage in practice and/or provide services in Tennessee that requires an additional permit or certification beyond licensure, the covered licensee must first obtain such permit or certification pursuant to Tennessee law.

Dentists

A covered licensee who is a dentist may, at the time of submitting the portability application or separately at a later time, apply for a limited conscious sedation permit, a comprehensive conscious sedation permit, and/or a deep sedation/general anesthesia permit in Tennessee by meeting the requirements as set forth in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0460-02-.07(6)(a)1, (6)(a)2, (7)(a)1, and (10). While all covered licensees must apply for a Tennessee permit and provide proof of meeting the educational requirements, a covered licensee who has previously completed educational requirements that comply with those listed in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0460-02-.07(6)(a)1, (6)(a)2, and/or (7)(a)1 may rely on that education for purposes of the application.

A covered licensee who is a dentist may also, at the time of submitting the portability application or separately at a later time, apply for specialty certification in one of the specialties listed under Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0460-02-.06(1). Each covered licensee must meet all general and specific requirements for each certification sought as listed in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0460-02-.06.

Dental Hygienists and Dental Assistants

Tennessee law also allows a dental hygienist or dental assistant to obtain certifications as delineated in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs., Rule Chapters 0460-03 and 0460-04, respectively.

While all covered licensees must apply for each desired certification in Tennessee pursuant to the requirements of Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs., Rule Chapters 0460-03 and 0460-04, those applicants who have completed a comparable training program in another state for any certification sought, may apply without additional training, provided the course is determined by the Board consultant to be equivalent to the Board-approved course in Tennessee. Information regarding content of the course and proof of completion must be sent directly from the course provider to the Board's administrative office. If such information is not available, then other proof may be deemed acceptable (e.g., school or course transcripts, syllabi, letters from the program, or course instructors, etc.). If a certification, or other written authority, was issued by the other state, verification of the certificate or other written authority must be received directly from the issuing state. If it is determined that the course is not equivalent, then the applicant must complete new certification courses as listed in Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs., Rule Chapters 0460-03 and 0460-04.

The lack of additional certifications will not delay the processing of a license portability application, but it may delay the ability to engage in any additional practice in Tennessee that requires certification.

Employers

A covered licensee who either successfully obtains a permit or certification in Tennessee or submits a certification from his or her original state of licensure that is approved by the Board consultant shall be issued a letter from the Board to such effect, and employers may rely on that letter regarding matters of employment.

Schools and Certification Courses

Additionally, notwithstanding any Board rule or regulation to the contrary, for purposes of licensure portability, the Board deems the following:

1. That any person holding a covered license to practice as a dentist in Tennessee is eligible to enroll in any anesthesia/sedation course offered in Tennessee; and
2. That any person holding a covered license to practice in Tennessee as a licensed dental hygienist or a registered dental assistant is eligible to enroll in any school or certification course approved by the Board.

Adopted by the Board of Dentistry on the 8th day of January, 2026.