



# Texas Physician Assistant Board

AUSTIN, TEXAS

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August 10, 2016

A message from the Presiding Officer:

Over the past year I have increasingly heard from many of you about the long wait for licensure. The TMB's regulatory oversight of medical occupations increased last fall, adding approximately 60,000 new licensee types. This, combined with the spring and early summer graduations, resulted in a surge for our processing department. This has also resulted in daily phone calls to the TMB increasing into the thousands with some days reporting upwards of 20,000 phone calls. Despite the extraordinary work by TMB staff, we recognize that not all of the spring graduates were processed in time to make the July Board meeting. Let me assure you that we take your concerns seriously and the Texas PA Board members are working to improve the licensing process.

Here are a few of the expected changes we anticipate will improve this process:

- The TMB Technology department will begin upgrading the original 1990's database systems, as well as possibly launching a portal allowing electronic submission of your application forms. These changes will allow for more efficient processing and thereby having fewer things done by hand and on paper files.
- The TMB has begun hiring and training additional licensing staff. Just as your PA training wasn't quick, neither is this process because we want to ensure our analysts continue to provide accurate and friendly service.
- Our future Board agenda will explore potential ways to allow the agency to issue a full license to qualified applicants faster and independently from our board meetings that currently occur just three times per year.

In addition to delays in processing licensure applications, some of you have expressed concern about hospital systems not accepting a temporary license as approval to begin practice. The TMB considers a temporary license as equally valid to a regular license; however, the TMB can not alter the policies of various health systems regarding their choice of whether or not to accept the temporary license for credentialing. We have issued many letters and statements in the past validating the Board's authority to issue these license types and will continue to advocate for their acceptance. Currently the temporary license is the only legal option for those of you applying between Board meetings but will become an agenda item as mentioned above.

Lastly, I'm happy to announce that our Board plans to hold a called meeting on August 29th 2016. This meeting will help expedite processing of applicants who are pending a permanent license to be issued. I'm optimistic that this will assist many of you who are otherwise qualified and are simply waiting for the next scheduled meeting which is planned for November.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation with the Texas PA Board.

Jason Cooper, MPAS, EMT-P, PA-C  
Presiding Officer