

Health Occupations Hearing Instrument Practical Examination Modification and Delay

HEALTH REGULATION DIVISION, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS PROGRAM

ATTENTION

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Health Regulation Division (HRD) is temporarily modifying and delaying certain regulatory requirements related to licensing audiologists and certifying hearing instrument dispensers.

The in-person practical examination required for licensure or certification has been suspended because of COVID-19 safety concerns. To reduce hardships for providers, HRD will allow qualified applicants to obtain a conditional license to practice audiology before they pass the practical exam; and allow qualified applicants for hearing instrument dispensing to obtain a conditional certification before they pass the practical exam. The waiver and modification will allow providers to hire audiologists and hearing instrument dispensers to serve individuals with hearing needs.

Requirements Being Modified

[Emergency Executive Order 20-32 \(https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-32.pdf\)](https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-32.pdf) issued on April 8, 2020, allows the Commissioner of Health to temporarily delay, waive, or modify certain requirements so that providers can take necessary action to assess, identify, treat, and support Minnesotans with COVID-19 and protect those Minnesotans who are not infected.

The following Minnesota Statutes related to licensing and certification requirements for audiologists and hearing instrument dispensers are now modified:

- [148.515, subd. 6 \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/148.515\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/148.515)
- [153A.14, subd. 2h\(a\)\(2\) \(https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/153A.14\)](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/153A.14)

What HRD is Doing Differently

During the COVID-19 peacetime emergency order and for 60 days after termination of the order, MDH will:

- Allow qualified applicants for audiology to obtain a conditional license before they pass the practical examination.
- Allow qualified applicants for certification as hearing instrument dispensers to obtain a conditional certificate before they pass the practical portion of the MDH hearing instrument dispensing examination, provided they pass the written examination

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administered by the International Hearing Society, and are supervised by a certified hearing instrument dispenser during the period of conditional certification.

- Require audiologists and hearing instrument dispensers to pass the practical portion of the examination within 60 days after termination of the peacetime emergency, or when MDH resumes administration of the examination.

Implementation Guidance

MDH issues the following guidance to assure safety during COVID-19 related restrictions:

- Audiologists and hearing instrument dispensers issued conditional licensure or certification under this waiver must schedule and pass the practical examination after the COVID-19 peacetime emergency is terminated, or when MDH resumes administration of the exam.
- Applicants applying for a conditional hearing instrument certification must demonstrate they have passed the written portion of the examination required by Minnesota Statutes, section 153A.14, subd. 2h(a)(1) and provide the name of their supervisor.
- Comply with all documentation and practice standards in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 153A and Minnesota Statutes, sections 148.511 to 148.5198.

Timeframe

The modifications will be in effect during COVID-19 peacetime orders, beginning January 22, 2021 and for 60 days after termination of the emergency peacetime orders.

Questions?

Contact the Health Occupations Program at health.hop@state.mn.us or 651-201-3731.

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-4101.