

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 1 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

All professional health care providers will maintain strict compliance with credentialing, licensure, and certification requirements in accordance with State Law and professional licensure boards operating under the Office of the Secretary of State of Georgia. This procedure is applicable to all facilities that house Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) offenders including private and county prisons.

II. Authority:

- A. O.C.G.A.: TITLES 43, 26;
- B. GDC Board Rules: 125-4-4.02, 400-2-.05 and 400-2-.07;
- C. NCCHC 2018 Adult Standard: P-C-01;
- D. ACA Standards: 5-ACI-6B-02, 5-ACI-6B-04, 4-ALDF-4D-03, 4-ALDF-4D-04, 4-ALDF-4D-05, 4-ACRS-4C-17, 4-ACRS-4C-18, and 4-ACRS-7B-02; and
- E. All professional Licensing Boards operating under the Office of the Georgia Secretary of State.

III. Definitions:

- A. **Professional Health Care Provider** - A licensed, registered, or certified health care employee whose position requires a license or credentials, which meet state credentialing laws.
- B. **Credential Verification** - A review process whereby the qualifications of health professionals (e.g., licensure, experience, training, and certification) required for employment are verified.
- C. **Clinician(s)** - Physician (MD or DO), Nurse Practitioner, or Physician's Assistant.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 2 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

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D. **Prescriber(s)** - Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Physician's Assistant, Dentist or Optometrist.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. The facility's Health Service Administrator will assure that new hires undergo a Credential Verification process that confirms current license, certification, or registration in the State of Georgia to include physical health, mental health, dental health, and all ancillary services. Specialists providing on-site or telehealth care services have appropriate licenses and certifications on file.
- B. The Credential Verification process will include an inquiry regarding sanctions or disciplinary actions of the state board, employer, and the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB). The vendor's Statewide Medical Director will utilize the NPDB to verify a Clinician or Prescriber's licensure prior to hiring the individual.
- C. A license that limits practice to only correctional health care will not be acceptable for suitable employment.
- D. Prospective employees will present only current original documents for verification purposes. A copy of the verification form from the Georgia Secretary of State and/or the Georgia Composite Board will be printed. The original license will be photocopied and attached to the verification form.
- E. Verification of current credentials for both contract and state employees will be maintained within the medical unit by the Health Service Administrator to include optometrist and physical therapist.
- F. Thereafter, employees governed by the Georgia Composite Board and the Georgia Professional Licensing Board Division will be responsible for keeping credentials current. This includes any mandated continuing medical education credit(s).

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 3 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

Access Listing:
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G. A printed copy of the results of the credential review will be maintained by the contract vendor and available for review by the Office of Health Services and audit teams.

1. The credential review process for physicians will include but not be limited to the following areas:
 - a. Verification of malpractice insurance if applicable local privileges;
 - b. Query of the NPDB (National Practitioner Data Bank);
 - c. Copy of the current professional license;
 - d. Copy of current ACLS and BCLS cards (American Heart Association or American Red Cross Healthcare Provider Course);
 - e. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) license, if applicable;
 - f. Copy of degree;
 - g. Pre-employment references;
 - h. Curriculum vitae;
 - i. Internship certification;
 - j. Residency certification, if applicable;
 - k. GDC background check;
 - l. Credential expiration dates;

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 4 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
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- m. Continuing medical education credits, if applicable; and
 - n. Pre-employment drug screening.
2. Nursing staff licensure will be verified through the Georgia Board of Nursing web site. The credentialing process for nurses will include but not be limited to the following areas:
- a. Copy of professional license and/or certification, if applicable, including continuing education units (CEU);
 - b. GDC background check;
 - c. Copy of current BCLS certification (American Heart Association or American Red Cross Healthcare Provider Course);
 - d. Pre-employment references;
 - e. Pre-employment drug screening; and
 - f. All nurses must comply with mandatory reporting required by HB 315 as related to licensure.
- H. All professional health care providers remain responsible for notifying the Health Service Administrator and the Warden/Superintendent's office immediately if their license to practice has been revoked, restricted, sanctioned or is under investigation for any reason. The GDC or Vendor Medical Director for the entity providing services will inquire into the sanctions or disciplinary actions that state boards, other employers and the NPDB (National Practitioner Data Bank) have taken.
- I. The Health Services Administrator or designee will notify the Warden/Superintendent as well as the GDC Statewide Medical Director and

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 5 of 6

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Health Services Division
(Physical Health)

Access Listing:
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contract vendor Statewide Medical Director in the event a health care professional's credentials are expired, revoked, restricted or under investigation for any reason.

- J. In the case of expired licenses, the licensed employee will not be allowed to work until the license is renewed and a copy of the new current license is presented to the Health Service Administrator or Director of Nurses.
- K. The provider will not work while his/her credential is expired, and the GDC bears no financial responsibility for any pay given to the provider while unable to practice.
- L. The Health Service Administrator must verify renewal of license prior to the licensed employee being allowed to return to work. A printed copy of the verification will be dated, signed, and attached to a copy of the license.
- M. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):
 - 1. Nursing license/certification verification will be conducted in January and July and when the employee's license/certification is renewed.
 - 2. Physician and mid-level provider's licenses will be verified monthly by the Health Service Administrator.
 - 3. For auditing purposes, the Health Service Administrator will maintain the licensure/certification in a binder manual which is set up in alphabetical order with the license on top and a printout from the licensure board used to verify the licensure. DEA and certifications such as ALCS and/or BCLS will be placed behind the license. This binder is to be kept in the office of the administrator in a secure place, maintained as current and readily available at audits.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Licensure and Credential Verification

Policy Number: 507.03.01

Effective Date: 01/25/2022

Page Number: 6 of 6

Authority:
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4. Mental health services will provide the Health Service Administrator with current copies of licenses for mental health providers to include psychiatrist, psychologist, clinical nurse specialist and licensed counselors.
5. Vendors providing licensed or certified staff to include dental, optometrist, physical therapists, agency staff, locum tenens, radiology, etc. will provide the Health Service Administrator with a current copy of their license and BCLS certifications.
6. Certified staff such as certified nursing aides, radiology techs, etc. who are required by the State of Georgia to maintain certification will provide a current copy of the certification and BCLS cared to the Health Service Administrator.

Note: The clinical update associated with this SOP may be found on the GDC Intranet at Captiva/Resources/Health Services Document Library/Physical Health/Clinical Updates.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** None.