

HB 214-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2025 SESSION

25-0107

09/08

HOUSE BILL ***214-FN***

AN ACT relative to the regulation of recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners.

SPONSORS: Rep. C. McGuire, Merr. 27

COMMITTEE: Executive Departments and Administration

ANALYSIS

This bill clarifies the rulemaking authority of the executive director of the office of professional licensure and certification (OPLC) with regards to the regulation of recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners and adds sections relating to criminal history records checks and privileged communications to the chapters on the regulation of recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners to be more consistent with other OPLC-related chapters.

This bill is at the request of the OPLC.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
 Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
 Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Five

AN ACT relative to the regulation of recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Recreational Therapists; Advisory Board Established. Amend RSA 326-J:1-a, II to read as
2 follows:

3 II. The executive director, in consultation with the advisory board, shall adopt rules
4 pursuant to RSA 541-A relative to the practice of recreational therapy, including: ~~[rules regarding~~
5 ~~the procedure for granting, revoking, and reinstating a license]~~

6 ***(a) Eligibility requirements for initial licensure;***

7 ***(b) Eligibility requirements for licensure renewal, including any continuing***
8 ***competency requirements and any requirements for education, clinical experience, and***
9 ***training;***

10 ***(c) Conditional employment pending the results of a criminal history records***
11 ***check;***

12 ***(d) Eligibility requirements, including any continuing competency***
13 ***requirements, for the reinstatement of licenses;***

14 ***(e) Scope of practice in the field of recreational therapy;***

15 ***(f) Ethical standards pertaining to the practice of recreational therapy;***

16 ***(g) What constitutes, for disciplinary purposes, sexual relations with and sexual***
17 ***harassment of a client or patient;***

18 ***(h) The allocation of disciplinary sanctions;***

19 ***(i) Completion by licensees, as part of the renewal process, a survey and opt-out***
20 ***form provided by the office of rural health, the department of health and human services,***
21 ***for the purpose of collecting data regarding the New Hampshire primary care workforce,***
22 ***pursuant to the commission established in RSA 126-T, along with written notice to***
23 ***licensees of the opportunity to opt-out from participation of the survey.***

24 2 New Sections; Recreational Therapists; Criminal History Record Checks and Privileged
25 Communications. Amend RSA 326-J by inserting after section 6 the following new sections:

26 326-J:7 Criminal History Record Checks.

27 I. The office shall require from applicants for initial licensure or certification, reinstatement
28 of licensure or certification, or conditional licensure or certification a criminal history record release
29 form, as provided by the New Hampshire division of state police which authorizes the release of his
30 or her criminal history record, if any, to the office.

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1 II. The applicant shall submit with the release form a complete set of fingerprints taken by a
2 qualified law enforcement agency or an authorized employee of the department of safety. In the
3 event that the first set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern, a second set of
4 fingerprints shall be necessary in order to complete the criminal history records check. If, after 2
5 attempts, a set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern, the office may, in lieu of the
6 criminal history records check, accept police clearances.

7 III. The office shall submit the criminal history records release form and fingerprint form to
8 the division of state police which shall conduct a criminal history records check through its records
9 and through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Upon completion of the records check, the division
10 of state police shall release copies of the criminal history records to the office.

11 IV. The office shall review the criminal record information prior to, where applicable, the
12 board making a decision on licensure or certification, and shall maintain the confidentiality of all
13 criminal history records received pursuant to this section.

14 V. The applicant shall bear the cost of all criminal history record checks.

15 VI. The office shall accept military security clearance for an individual actively serving in
16 any component of the Department of Defense in lieu of criminal background checks.

17 VII. Pending the results of a criminal history record check, an applicant for licensure may be
18 employed in a profession of the recreational therapist field on a conditional basis for up to 90
19 calendar days before the office receives the results of a criminal history record check required for
20 licensure, if the conditional employee:

21 (a) Is under the direct supervision of a licensee;

22 (b) Has provided a written attestation to the employer and the office that no
23 disqualifying criminal history exists; and

24 (c) The recreational therapist board is not a member of an interstate licensure compact.

25 326-J:8 Privileged Communications.

26 The confidential communications between licensed recreational therapists and their clients or
27 patients is placed on the same legal basis as those between physician and patient, and except as
28 otherwise provided by law, no recreational therapist shall be required to disclose such privileged
29 communications. Confidential communications between a patient or client and any person working
30 under the supervision of such practitioner that are customary and necessary for diagnosis and
31 treatment are privileged to the same extent as though those communications were with the
32 supervising licensed practitioner. This section shall not apply to investigations and hearings
33 conducted by the office or by any other agency regulating health professions in the state.

34 3 Respiratory Care Practice; Rulemaking. Amend RSA 326-E:2, VI to read as follows:

35 VI. ***Specifying the scope of*** respiratory care practice, including rules regarding the
36 ***criteria and*** procedures for granting, revoking, and reinstating a license.

VII. Pertaining to the completion by licensees, as part of the renewal process, a survey and opt-out form provided by the office of rural health, the department of health and human services, for the purpose of collecting data regarding the New Hampshire primary care workforce, pursuant to the commission established in RSA 126-T, along with written notice to licensees of the opportunity to opt-out from participation of the survey.

4 New Sections; Respiratory Care Practice; Criminal History Record Checks and Privileged Communications. Amend RSA 326-E by inserting after section 11 the following new sections:

326-E:12 Criminal History Record Checks.

I. The office shall require from applicants for initial licensure or certification, reinstatement of licensure or certification, or conditional licensure or certification a criminal history record release form, as provided by the New Hampshire division of state police which authorizes the release of his or her criminal history record, if any, to the office.

II. The applicant shall submit with the release form a complete set of fingerprints taken by a qualified law enforcement agency or an authorized employee of the department of safety. In the event that the first set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern, a second set of fingerprints shall be necessary in order to complete the criminal history records check. If, after 2 attempts, a set of fingerprints is invalid due to insufficient pattern, the office may, in lieu of the criminal history records check, accept police clearances.

III. The office shall submit the criminal history records release form and fingerprint form to the division of state police which shall conduct a criminal history records check through its records and through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Upon completion of the records check, the division of state police shall release copies of the criminal history records to the office.

IV. The office shall review the criminal record information prior to, where applicable, the board making a decision on licensure or certification, and shall maintain the confidentiality of all criminal history records received pursuant to this section.

V. The applicant shall bear the cost of all criminal history record checks.

VI. The office shall accept military security clearance for an individual actively serving in any component of the Department of Defense in lieu of criminal background checks.

VII. Pending the results of a criminal history record check, an applicant for licensure may be employed in a profession of the respiratory care field on a conditional basis for up to 90 calendar days before the office receives the results of a criminal history record check required for licensure, if the conditional employee:

(a) Is under the direct supervision of a licensee;

(b) Has provided a written attestation to the employer and the office that no disqualifying criminal history exists; and

(c) The respiratory care practitioners board is not a member of an interstate licensure compact.

1 326-E:13 Privileged Communications.

2 The confidential communications between licensed respiratory care practitioners and their
3 clients or patients is placed on the same legal basis as those between physician and patient, and
4 except as otherwise provided by law, no respiratory care practitioner shall be required to disclose
5 such privileged communications. Confidential communications between a patient or client and any
6 person working under the supervision of such practitioner that are customary and necessary for
7 diagnosis and treatment are privileged to the same extent as though those communications were
8 with the supervising licensed practitioner. This section shall not apply to investigations and
9 hearings conducted by the office or by any other agency regulating health professions in the state.

10 5 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

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11/4/24

**HB 214-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to the regulation of recreational therapists and respiratory care practitioners.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Legislative Budget Assistant has determined that this legislation has a total fiscal impact of less than \$10,000 in each of the fiscal years 2025 through 2028.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Office of Professional Licensure and Certification