



FOCUS

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The Quarterly Newsletter for Physician Office Staff

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Lehigh Valley Hospital Medical Staff Reappointment Process to Begin March 3

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In compliance with the regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Medical Staff and Hospital Bylaws, and the standards of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, each member of the hospital's Medical Staff must be reappointed a minimum of once every two years.

On March 3, this year's biennial reappointment process will be put into motion when Reappointment Packets will be mailed to over 1,000 members of the Medical Staff. Each packet will contain a five-page Application for Reappointment to the Medical Staff, a copy of the addressee's current privilege sheet, a new blank privilege sheet to transfer currently approved privileges, a malpractice claims report, a self-addressed return envelope, and to simplify the process, a Checklist has been included to assist in completing the information.

Although much of the information on the application is preprinted for each physician, it is of paramount importance that ALL the information is re-

viewed, changes made where necessary, and missing data completed. Before returning the application, please take a moment to review the Checklist to make sure all the information is complete and all the required documents have been attached to the application.

Please Note: **Associate** and **Affiliate** members are required to provide a letter of good standing from their primary hospital. It is the physician's responsibility to insure that the good standing letter is received by the Medical Staff Services Office.

The deadline to return reappointment applications is March 22. Your prompt attention in facilitating the return of the application(s) for your physician(s) is both requested and appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding the reappointment process, please contact the Medical Staff Services Office at (610) 402-8900.

Lehigh Valley Hospital Credentialing 101

Do you have plans to add a new practitioner to your practice? If so, the following information may be helpful in expediting his/her privileges at Lehigh Valley Hospital.

When adding a new physician or allied health practitioner to your practice, you are often faced by an overwhelming number of tasks in trying to assure a smooth start. You may need to apply for a Pennsylvania license for someone coming from out of state, in addition to applying for insurance participation, malpractice coverage, and privileges at all of the hospitals the practitioner intends to practice.

While the process of applying for membership and privileges at the hospital may be overwhelming, knowing the requirements ahead of time will allow you to maximize your efforts and gain privileges for your practitioner in the quickest possible timeframe. Utilizing the following information as a guide will help expedite the credentialing process for your practitioner.

Requesting an Application

Requests may be made by phone to the Medical Staff Services Office at 610-402-8900, or via written request faxed to: 610-402-8926. Requests must include the following information:

- applicant's full name
- birthdate
- social security number
- home address
- home phone number
- e-mail address
- group practice applicant is joining

- specialty
- board certified date or, if not certified, date training program was completed
- staff category being requested (e.g., Active, Associate [available only in certain Departments], or Affiliate)
- anticipated start date

Responsibilities of the Applicant

There are a number of documents required to complete an application. Please refer to the listing of required documents below. It is the applicant's responsibility to initiate requests to the involved parties to provide required letters of reference/good standing, malpractice claims history for the most recent five years, etc. To avoid unnecessary delays in completing the application, it is recommended that requests for references, etc., be made by you or the applicant to the involved parties as soon as your contract negotiations with the practitioner have been successfully concluded. Once those requests are made, it is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that the documents have been received by Medical Staff Services.

Important Facts

- Applications are not considered to be complete until all required letters and documents have been received by Medical Staff Services;
- All documentation must be addressed to **VeriQual/Lehigh Valley Hospital** and

mailed directly to the Office of Medical Staff Services by the author of the letter or document. (Note that letters addressed "To Whom It May Concern" do not satisfy the requirement.)

- No hospital staff interviews may be conducted until the application is considered complete by Medical Staff Services.

Required Documents

(Please Note: You may begin requesting these items as soon as your contract with the individual is signed. No need to wait until you receive the Medical/Allied Health Staff application to get started.)

- Recommendation letters from program directors of **ALL** internship, residency, and fellowship programs attended. Allied Health Staff must provide recommendation letters from directors of **ALL** training programs attended. (Note that copies of certificates do not satisfy the requirement.)
- Recommendation letters from most current Medical/Administrative Supervisor (i.e., Hospital Department Chair, etc.) Allied Health Staff must provide recommendation letters from most recent Clinical Supervisor.

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- History of all malpractice claims filed against the practitioner for the last five years, and the status of each claim, provided directly from the corresponding insurance carrier(s)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Recent Photograph
- Copies of License, DEA Certificate, Board Certificate(s) or, if not certified, letter of eligibility, current malpractice policy facesheet (indicating time periods of coverage and coverage amounts)
- Copy of NEW malpractice policy facesheet with coverage under the new practice group
- Copy of Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions attended in last two years
- Query of the Federation of State Medical Boards for adverse/corrective actions against any PA or other state licenses
- Query of the OIG (Office of Inspector General) website for Medicare/Medicaid sanctions
- Query of the State Board's website to verify license(s) is current and in good standing without any prior actions
- Query to confirm the DEA Certificate is current and in good standing without any prior actions
- Query of the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Dental Association, or other similar designated agency to verify medical education
- Query of the ECFMG for foreign medical graduates
- Query of the American Board of Medical Specialties or equivalent sources to verify board certification (Allied Health practitioner certifications must be similarly verified)
- Analysis of all documentation for missing information or potential discrepancies with appropriate follow up
- Analysis of all recommendations for potential discrepancies and/or "red flags" requiring immediate follow up
- Analysis of all documentation for gaps (non-continuous periods of time) in education, training, and experience, with appropriate follow up
- Review of the privilege sheet to determine whether specific privileges were requested and whether volumes over the last two years for each of those privileges were provided
- Review of the information provided to determine whether certain privileges requested require further documentation as to the applicant's training and experience in order to satisfy credentialing criteria established by the clinical department, with appropriate follow up

Once all documentation has been received by Medical Staff Services and the application is deemed to be complete, the applicant will be notified by Medical Staff Services to schedule interviews with the required Medical Staff and/or Nursing Leadership. Depending on the extent of privileges being requested, an applicant may be required to interview with a minimum of two persons, or as many as six or seven individuals. These interviews **must** be completed before the Credentials Committee meeting.

The completed application, all required documentation, and all interviews must be completed by the applicant in order to be presented at the Credentials Committee meeting for consideration. No privileges will be granted until after the Credentials Committee considers the application.

Resources Available to the Public for Verifying Information on Applicants

As practice manager, you may wish to take advantage of the following free public internet resources to give you information about your

Processing the Application

You may be tempted to think that once you have submitted a practitioner's application and all supporting documentation, the hospital would then immediately grant him or her privileges. However, you have only completed the first part of the entire process. There is still much yet to be done by Medical Staff Services in order to comply with the myriad of federal and state laws and regulatory agency requirements.

Following are the required tasks performed by the Medical Staff Services team:

- Query of the National Practitioner Data Bank for adverse/corrective actions or malpractice payments

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potential allied health practitioner or physician associate before you get “too far” into the hiring process.

- Pennsylvania State Board of Licensure – Verify Current Licensure: <http://licensepa.state.pa.us/default.asp>
- OIG Website – Check for Medicare/Medicaid or Other Sanctions: <http://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/search.html>

Contractual Issues vs. Medical/Allied Staff Membership and Privileges

Keep in mind that your contractual arrangements with the new practitioner are completely separate from hospital staff membership and privileges. If you intend for the practitioner to begin working in the hospital immediately upon joining your practice, you may wish to negotiate the start date for the middle of the month, since hospital privileges are considered by the Credentials Committee on the second Thursday of each month. Please be aware that until the Credentials Committee takes action on the completed application, the applicant is not permitted to function in the hospital, not even in an observation-only status. Until the Credentials Committee review, the practitioner’s exercise of privileges is limited to your office only.

Another complicated situation is one where the practitioner, who will also be working in the hospital, starts with the practice, but due to issues uncovered during the hospital’s credentialing process, hospital privileges are not granted. You can protect your practice by including a co-terminous clause in your contract with the individual, making employment with the practice contingent upon successful credentialing and privileging on the Lehigh Valley Hospital staff.

Turnaround Time for Application Process

Given the process above, a typical application can comfortably be processed in six weeks. However, the amount of time from start to finish may vary based upon an applicant’s motivation and organization. In addition, the timing of the actual granting of privileges is dependent upon when the application is completed with respect to when the next Credentials Committee will be held.

- Allow at least four weeks to get all paperwork submitted to Medical Staff Services
- Set your target date for all paperwork to have been received by Medical Staff Services as the last Thursday of the month. (Anything received beyond that date may not be processed in time for the upcoming Credentials Committee meeting and may need to be held for an additional month.)
- Once the application and documentation are received by Medical Staff Services, allow two weeks for follow-up to the applicant, for Medical Staff Services verifications to be completed, and for the required interviews to be conducted.
- The Credentials Committee will consider the new application at the meeting held on the second Thursday of the month. Privileges may be granted after the Committee makes a favorable recommendation.

If you have any questions regarding the credentialing process or would like to meet with the credentialing staff for a more personal discussion of the hospital credentialing and privileging process, please contact Brenda E. Lehr, Director, Medical Staff Services, at 610-402-8975.

Medical Staff Directory Available On-line

Medical Staff directories are now available on-line through the hospital’s Intranet. If you are directly linked to the hospital’s Intranet system, go to the hospital’s homepage under the “What’s New” section and select “Medical Staff Services.” Select the “Directories and Lists” button, then select “Medical Staff Directory.” These lists are updated regularly during the first week of each month.

For those practices that are not directly linked to the hospital’s Intranet system, new paper copies of the Medical Staff Directory are now available. To obtain a copy for your practice, contact Janet M. Seifert in Medical Staff Services at 610-402-8590.

State Board of Nursing Encourages On-line Verification of Licensure by Employers

The Department of State Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs offers the public the opportunity to conduct searches of licensed professionals via the secure MyLicense website at:
<http://www.licensepa.state.pa.us/default.asp>.

To search for a person, you may search by last name, first and last name, or license number (RN001234).

The State Board of Nursing encourages all entities employing nurses to verify licensure via the MyLicense website, in addition to retaining the original display portion of the nursing license. The Board continues to receive reports of individuals who have presented altered Pennsylvania licensure documents to Pennsylvania employers or who have continued to practice using expired licensure documents or documents which do not reflect their suspended or revoked status. Such individuals may never

have validly attained nursing licensure in this Commonwealth.

The Board makes every effort to ensure that individuals who commit fraud and deceit in the practice of nursing or in securing admission to such practice are appropriately sanctioned. However, in order to protect patients and clients from such fraudulent and unethical practices, the facility, home care agency, physician office, or any other entity employing nurses in the Commonwealth should ensure that the nurses it employs hold a valid Pennsylvania license or temporary practice permit authorizing them to practice nursing in this Commonwealth.

If you have any questions regarding the authenticity of a licensure document, contact the State Board of Nursing at 717-783-7142.

Who's New

Kathy Adams **Office Manager**

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Darlene Misselbeck **Practice Manager**

Eastern PA Nephrology Associates
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Phone: 610-432-4529
Fax: 610-432-2206

For the Calendar

General Medical Staff Meetings

Following are the dates of the General Medical Staff meetings for 2004. The meetings, which begin at 6 p.m., will be held in the hospital's Auditorium at Cedar Crest & I-78 and videoconferenced to the First Floor Conference Room at LVH-Muhlenberg.

- Monday, March 8, 2004
- Monday, June 14, 2004
- Monday, September 13, 2004
- Monday, December 13, 2004

2004 Physician Recognition Dinner

The 2004 Physician Recognition Dinner will be held on Saturday, May 1, 2004, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Fogelsville, Pa. Invitations will be sent to all physicians in early March. Please Note: If the physician(s) in your practice have changed their home address within the last three years, please contact Janet M. Seifert at 610-402-8590 as the invitations for the dinner will be mailed to the physician's home address.



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From the Editor:

Please help us keep our records accurate. If your office manager has changed, please call Janet Seifert in Medical Staff Services at (610) 402-8590.

FOCUS is published quarterly for the office staffs of physicians on the Medical Staff of Lehigh Valley Hospital. Articles for the next issue should be submitted by May 7, 2004, to Janet M. Seifert, Medical Staff Services, Lehigh Valley Hospital, Cedar Crest & I-78, P.O. Box 689, Allentown, PA 18105-1556 or emailed to janet.seifert@lvh.com. For more information, please call Janet at (610) 402-8590.