



## MAY 2025 NEWS BLAST

### North Dakota Board of Medicine

4204 Boulder Ridge Rd Ste 260

Bismarck, ND 58503

(701) 450-4060

#### [2025 Meeting Schedule](#)

January 31, 2025

May 2, 2025

July 25, 2025

October 24, 2025

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Spring is finally here, and the North Dakota Board of Medicine held its quarterly meeting in Bismarck May 2, 2025. A few items from the meeting deserve your attention.

The ND Professional Health Program (NDPHP) gave an update. Recent legislation will allow them to collaborate with other professional groups within the state including dentists and veterinarians. Former licensees of the Board of Medicine are also eligible to continue with the program. NDPHP is not a punitive organization; their goal is to keep providers in practice and performing well. In addition to substance use disorder monitoring and referrals, they are available to assist with finding resources for clinicians who struggle with depression, burnout, and other mental health issues. Contacting the NDPHP does not require enrollment in the program, put a target on your back, or get reported to the Board of Medicine. Most of their work is done with individuals who self-refer and about whom the Board of Medicine is never notified. The Board of Medicine is only involved in situations where a provider presents a real or potential

danger to the public. We encourage all licensees to reach out for more information or confidential referrals.

The ND legislature wrapped up its most recent session in the early hours of May 3, 2025. Our thanks to our Executive Director, Sandra DePountis, for working closely with the legislature to educate and advocate on legislation that affects the functions of the Board and the licensees in our state. Director DePountis has been an invaluable asset in collaborating with the legislature and other North Dakota provider-facing organizations.

The North Dakota Board of Medicine will be sending a delegation to the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities meeting in the fall. I am pleased to announce the Board Member Jay Metzger, PA, has been chosen to present at the conference. He will be speaking on the Regulation of Physician Assistants Before and After the Implementation of Expanded Autonomy. As states look at alternative pathways to licensure of foreign medical practitioners, the conference will provide needed guidance and education as we continue to get requests for legislation and collaboration from senators, representatives, and key stakeholders on this topic.

As you may be aware, there is a national movement toward alternative pathways to licensure for physicians trained outside the US. This will be an ongoing issue as the shortage of primary care providers continues to worsen, especially in rural areas. The Board of Medicine is watching these developments closely and working with the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and other entities to ensure that the training of physicians licensed in our state meets accepted guidelines. The state board does not have the expertise or resources to vet every offshore training program, especially residencies. We are, however, monitoring developments in other jurisdictions and working collaboratively on solutions that protect the public and uphold appropriate standards. Again, many thanks to our Executive Director for her outstanding work on these initiatives.

With the approach of summer will come a busy time for the staff at the Board of Medicine. July brings a new crop of residents to the state, and they all need licensure. In addition, many graduates of residencies will be seeking new licenses. Shout out to the hard work of Lynette McDonald, Larissa Stoddart, and Beth Ripplinger for the work they do behind the scenes to keep this process moving smoothly.

We wish you a happy and healthy summer. The next meeting of the Board of Medicine will be virtual on July 25, 2025.

Best Regards,

Catherine Houle, MD  
Chair, North Dakota Board of Medicine

## **INTRODUCING ZENA HOMAN, MD, AS THE BOARD'S MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Medical Director of the North Dakota Board of Medicine. I am deeply honored to join such a prestigious organization and to work alongside a driven team dedicated to protecting public health and ensuring the highest standards of medical practice. My years of clinical practice and leadership in Obstetrics and Gynecology as well as my experience as a former appointed member of the North Dakota Board of Medicine and Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission have made me acutely aware of the evolving challenges within healthcare and have deepened my commitment to positively impacting the health and safety of those we are privileged to serve here in North Dakota. I hope to bring a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of medical care as well as the ethical and regulatory considerations that shape our work, which I believe will be instrumental in fulfilling our mission. In my new role, I will focus on key areas such as investigatory and licensure responsibilities while working closely with the Executive Director to aid in the formulation and interpretation of policies, procedures, laws, and regulations governing the operation of the Board as well as researching emerging healthcare issues, topics, and trends. My goal is to uphold the integrity and excellence that the North Dakota Board of Medicine is known for, while also bringing innovative approaches to our processes, I look forward to serving the Board in this new capacity and am committed to advancing our shared goals to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare by regulating the practice of medicine, and ensuring quality health care for the citizens of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Zena Homan, MD, FACOG  
Medical Director  
North Dakota Board of Medicine

## MAY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

At the meeting on May 2, 2025, the North Dakota Board of Medicine approved 93 Physician licenses which included 1 license granted after an interview, 20 Physician Assistant licenses, 12 Genetic Counselor licenses, and 2 Naturopathic Doctor licenses. There were 17 Letters of Qualification for State of Principal Licensure issued and 232 Non-State of Principal licenses issued through the Interstate Medical Licensing Compact (IMLC).

The Board received reports from Investigative Panel A and Investigative Panel B regarding the number of complaints reviewed and acted upon. A total of 61 cases were reviewed, which included 11 summary matter cases and 18 malpractice cases. Of these cases, disciplinary action was initiated in 2 cases, 4 letters of concern were issued, 1 case was referred to the Board for its meeting the next day for immediate suspension, and 6 cases were tabled to obtain additional information; all other cases were dismissed, or no further action taken.

**The Laws, Rules, and Legislative (LRL) Committee** provided an update on the 2025 Legislative Session, with the following key bills discussed.

- The NDBOM submitted bills ([HB 1039](#) – PHP Bill to allow for “former licensees” to be eligible for the program, [SB 2040](#) – allowing Genetic Counselors to order their own testing, [SB 2042](#) – authorizing background checks for Naturopathic Doctors and Genetic Counselors) were filed with the Secretary of State’s Office and will go into effect August 1, 2025.
- [HB 1511](#) - the amended bill ultimately requires the Office of Management and Budget to contract with a physician with 25 years’ experience to provide an educational course on several areas of North Dakota’s abortion laws. The course must be approved by the Attorney General and made available on the Board’s website. Finally, the bill requires any physician who performs an abortion to review the course within two years before the performance of an abortion – though this provision does not apply in the case of a medical emergency.
- [SB 2308](#) - section 10 creates a Board Review Task Force to assess all boards, commissions, councils, task forces, and committees for inefficiencies and duplication of responsibility in order to make a recommendation to the next legislative assembly regarding minimizing and streamlining government operations through the consolidation or elimination of such entity.
- [SB 2395](#) - creates Universal Licensure and standard requirements for all regulatory and licensing boards. The Board of Medicine already implements the standard requirements.

The following bills were opposed by the Board and ultimately defeated:

- [HB 1220](#) –amended to allow the Board of Medicine to have discretion on whether to designate medical education and physician assistant education as eligible for an accelerated degree program. As such designations must come from the appropriate credentialing authority, the Board had no ability to issue such designations.
- [SB 2108](#) – PA Compact. The LRL Committee discussed how the compact is not yet operational and has several “unknowns” at this time that include cost, legal implications, and how to address verification of PA’s practice within the scope of North Dakota law. Information was provided to the Senate Workforce Development Committee in a neutral capacity on some of these issues. The bill was ultimately defeated by the Senate. The Board’s office will continue to monitor the PA Compact as the Commission meets on implementing rules to see if some of the “unknowns” are answered and if it should be considered at the next legislative session.
- [SB 2270](#) – alternative pathway for licensure of international physicians – which removes the requirement for international physicians to attend an accredited U.S. residency program. The Board continues to discuss and find

workable solutions to this issue. As previously recognized, at this time there is no entity that verifies, or credentials, international training and the Board would not have the resources and capabilities to determine such “substantial equivalency.” There are national/international entities working on this – and discussions on the topic and potential solutions continue – but at this time, to implement would be premature as there is nothing in place to vet or verify competency, putting the citizens of North Dakota at risk. The bill was defeated by the Senate. **PLEASE NOTE: The Board discussed convening a task force/committee in the next biennium to study the issue and engage with key stakeholders for a path forward.** More information will be available on the Board’s website under News – but if anyone is interested in being a part of this continued discussion, please email Director DePountis at [sdepountis@ndbom.org](mailto:sdepountis@ndbom.org)

- **SB 2285** – taking away judicial deference of the Board. Administrative Law Judges who provide recommended findings of fact, conclusions of law, and orders are not licensed medical practitioners and therefore may lack the ability to issue opinions on certain nuanced areas of standards of care. It is therefore necessary for the Board to retain such ability to issue final determinations. The bill was defeated by the House on 3/14/2025 with a 31-57 vote.

This was the last in-person meeting for Chair Houle, whose two-term limits will end July 31, 2025. Dr. Houle has been on the Board for 8 years and spent the last 2 years as chair. She has tirelessly advocated for public protection in her role. Governor Armstrong issued a letter to Dr. Houle thanking her for her many years of service and recognizing “Your hard work and dedication through the challenges of a global pandemic, new technologies, shifting policies and workforce limitation has been instrumental in moving our state forward to a healthier tomorrow. Thank you for your efforts to achieve the board mission and advance a shared vision of accessible, ever-improving healthcare for our fellow North Dakotans in their journey through life.” A plaque with the letter engraved therein was provided to Dr. Houle at the meeting.



**The Board is pleased to announce through unanimous approval the appointment of chair to Jay Metzger, PA, and Misty Anderson, DO, as vice-chair. They will assume their new roles August 1, 2025.**

## PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT CORNER

The 69<sup>th</sup> North Dakota Legislative session came to an end in the early morning hours of Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. While we may not always agree with every decision made in our democratic process, I think we should all appreciate the service of our elected officials and the time it takes out of their busy lives. From a Board of Medicine perspective, our Executive Director, Sandra DePountis, also deserves a big thank you from everyone the Board regulates. Sandy spends countless hours during Legislative Sessions advocating for our licensees and processes that keep our citizens safe.

The Board of Medicine had input on numerous bills related to physicians during the session, but it was a fairly quiet year for PAs. The one bill that would have directly affected PAs was SB 2108, regarding the adoption of the PA Compact. As PA Lannoye mentioned in his summary in January, multiple issues need to be addressed with the PA Compact before the ND Board of Medicine can support it.

One of the most recent significant legislative changes that affected PAs was during the 66<sup>th</sup> ND Legislative Session in 2019. With the passage of HB 1175, PAs are no longer required to be supervised by a physician for purposes of licensure. While there is always controversy with such changes, the bill met little resistance, passed both chambers with unanimous votes, and was signed by then-Governor Burgum.

With a full five years since enacting those laws, we decided to research what the Board of Medicine has seen regarding complaints, adverse actions, and malpractice cases against PAs. We looked at the five years prior to the legislation and the five years since. Our findings: there have not been any significant changes in the number of complaints, adverse actions, or malpractice cases against PAs. These findings are reassuring to the Board, PAs, and other stakeholders. The study's full findings will be presented at the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities Conference in September of this year, and we will pass them on to you all this fall. Stay tuned!

Thanks for all you do and have a great summer!

Jay Metzger, PA

ND Board of Medicine

## NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR CORNER

As many of you know, Senate Bill 2041, which would have allowed alternative pathways to independent prescribing for naturopathic doctors in North Dakota, failed. As such, know that under current law, in addition to the required physician oversight under the limited endorsement, naturopathic doctors MUST pass the NPLEX pharmacology elective examination before they can prescribe independently. This is an independent examination required in addition to Steps I and II. The next examination is August 7, 2025, and the deadline to register is June 2, 2025. For more information, please visit the [NABNE](#) website for testing sites and important dates/deadlines. For more information on the requirements for endorsements – please visit the Board’s website – there is a tab specifically devoted to [Endorsements](#).

In addition, please be aware that the Board’s Laws, Rules, and Legislative Committee will be meeting at noon central time on June 17, 2025, via Zoom. The Committee will be reviewing the Board’s Administrative Code to consider updates and implementation of recent legislation. The Committee will also be reviewing the Naturopathic Doctor’s Formulary found in [North Dakota Administrative Code 50-06-02-08](#). If you have any considerations for changes you would like the Committee to review, please contact either me or Director DePountis ([sdepountis@ndbom.org](mailto:sdepountis@ndbom.org)) at least a week in

advance of the meeting so we can get the information in front of the Committee. This is a public meeting as well, so feel free to join. The agenda and link to join can be found on the Board's website under [Meeting Schedule and Agendas](#).

Sincerely,

Lezlie Scott, ND

Naturopathic Doctor representative on the North Dakota Board of Medicine

## **GENETIC COUNSELOR CORNER**

We are pleased to announce that [Senate Bill 2040](#) passed this legislative session which allows Genetic Counselors to order their own testing, updates the exam limit timeline requirement for licensure, and allows the Board to implement rules on exceptions to the three-exam limit law. The bill goes into effect August 1, 2025.

Please contact the Board with any questions.

## **BOARD OF MEDICINE VACANCY FOR 2025**

The North Dakota Board of Medicine is seeking a qualified individual to serve on the Board. One vacant physician position will be opened on July 31, 2025. To be eligible, the physician member must hold an active North Dakota license and have practiced in the state for at least 5 years. The term of office for each member of the Board is 4 years and a Board member may serve no more than 2 successive terms.

The Board encourages those serving in rural areas of the state to apply.

The chosen individual should expect to devote time to the Board in order to be a proactive member. The Board holds quarterly meetings in January, April, July, and October. Two meetings are virtual and two are in person. Members serve on an Investigatory Panel which meet the Thursday before the Board meeting and usually lasts 2-3 hours. Due to the high volume of cases reviewed by the Panels, members should expect to devote 8-10 hours to preparing for the Panel meetings. Board meetings are held the following Friday morning and usually last about 4 hours. Members can expect 4-6 hours of preparation for regular Board meetings. Members are also asked to serve on one standing committee of the Board – which meet between 2-5 times a year, normally for an hour. If you have inquiries or requests for additional information, please contact the Board's Executive Director, Sandra DePountis, [sdepountis@ndbom.org](mailto:sdepountis@ndbom.org).

To apply for an appointment, please fill out the application form on the Governor's website:

<https://apps.nd.gov/gov/boards/Application/PersonalInfo>

## **A LETTER FROM THE NDPHP**

As a licensed professional by the ND Board of Medicine, your wellness is essential—not just for your patients but for you. We understand that the challenges of a medical career go far beyond clinical responsibilities. The NDPHP is here to support you with many different forms of wellness including health conditions and situational stressors, not just substance-related concerns.

## What we do

The NDPHP can assist with a wide range of issues, including:

- ✓ Burnout & Stress
- ✓ Mental Health Challenges (Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, etc.)
- ✓ Family & Relationship Stress
- ✓ Medical & Physical Health Conditions
- ✓ Substance Use Concerns
- ✓ Professional & Workplace Issues

You are not alone — many of your colleagues have turned to NDPHP for assistance or resources, and we are here for you too. Early intervention or referrals are key, we want to provide support before a patient, provider, or practice is impacted. Be aware of precursor events such as calling in sick, showing up late, getting behind on documentation, mood changes, or appearance changes that might indicate someone is experiencing burnout, mental health issues, or a substance use disorder.

## Busting the Myths

- ✗ NDPHP is NOT part of the licensing board. Your participation is confidential and does not automatically impact your license.
- ✗ We do NOT just serve substance-related concerns. While we help with these cases, the majority of our work focuses on mental health, burnout, and general well-being.
- ✗ You don't have to be in crisis to reach out. We provide preventive, proactive support so you can maintain a fulfilling career and personal life.
- ✗ Not everyone who calls the NDPHP receives a monitoring agreement. We also offer resources and support specific to professionals.

If you are concerned about a provider on your team, have a need for collaborating to develop education or training, or want to learn more about our program and ways we may be able to help, reach out to us at [info@ndphp.org](mailto:info@ndphp.org) or [ndphp.org](http://ndphp.org).

Sincerely,

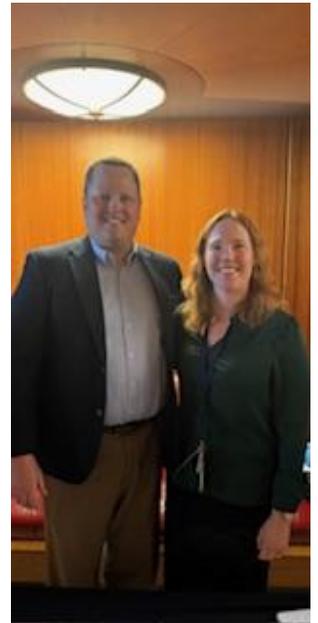
Maggie Seamands, RN, MSN CMGT-BC, CNML

NDPHP Executive Director

## NEWS

### On the Hill

Board members Jay Metzger, PA, and Misty Anderson, DO, participated in the physician and physician assistant day at the Capitol on March 25, 2025. Lawmakers meet with our health care practitioners, hospitals, and associations to learn about health care in North Dakota. Information booths were set up by the ND Medical Association, ND Academy of Physician Assistants, ND Hospital Association, ND Academy of Family Physicians, ND Emergency Medical Services Association, ND Academy of Pediatrics, ND Society of Eye Physicians, North Dakota Hospitals, etc. Dr. Anderson served as “Doctor of the Day” and was able to assist several legislators and state employees.



### NDBOM Attends FSMB Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA



Board Members Misty Anderson, DO, and Lezlie Link, ND, along with Board Staff Sandy DePountis (Executive Director), Lynette McDonald (Deputy Executive Director) and Zena Homan, MD (Medical Director) – attended FSMB’s 2025 Annual Conference in Seattle, WA. The Conference hit on numerous topics pertinent to North Dakota – including AI’s transformation of medicine, the evolving definition of the “practice of medicine,” fostering critical thinking in the age of information overload, and receiving an update on legislation at federal and state levels. As new issues emerge on a national level, the North Dakota Board of Medicine

continues to be at the table for these discussions – helping to shape policy and law that is good for North Dakota. Essential collaboration occurs to verify that North Dakota is in line with best practices and national standards. We look forward to bringing what we learned back to North Dakota as we continue to delve into ever evolving law and policy affecting the practice of medicine. Dr. Anderson (pictured) also served as the voting delegate representing North Dakota – playing a key part in having a voice to further policy decisions and discussions by the FSMB.



## **JOIN PROVIDER BRIDGE TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The incidence of emergencies and disasters has increased steadily in the U.S. since the 1980's. In 2023, the United States experienced 25 disasters, including a deadly wildfire in Maui and Hurricane Idalia in Florida. By registering for Provider Bridge, you will join thousands of qualified medical providers who are ready to provide care and contribute to the effective emergency management of these disasters.

### **Provider Bridge Supports States' Emergency Preparedness and Response**

Provider Bridge is a free-to-use technology platform that maintains a comprehensive registry of health professionals that can be accessed expeditiously to prepare for and respond to local, regional, or national emergencies or public health crises.

Joining the Provider Bridge platform allows you to create and own a time-stamped, digital report ("passport") that includes your name, provider type, professional school and graduation date, NPI, state license number(s), specialty or area of practice, and DEA registration(s), as well as any disciplinary history. Each license is verified via data sharing with the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

Provider Bridge also allows entities, including state medical and nursing boards, hospitals, health care institutions, public health offices, and emergency management entities to search for verified medical professionals who are willing to assist in an emergency or deploy to a disaster site or provide telehealth services. Additionally, entities can verify the credentials of state-based registrants as well as those professionals in other states.

Currently, Provider Bridge includes physicians, PAs, and nurses and is positioned to expand to include other medical professionals, such as mental health providers (psychologists, counselors, social workers), respiratory therapists, EMS providers, and others.

### **Register Now!**

Provider Bridge supports expeditious emergency response most effectively by having a large number of medical professionals registered on the platform. Registration is free and takes only a few minutes at the following link: <https://provider.providerbridge.org/>.

### **What to Expect After Registering for Provider Bridge**

Once you have registered for Provider Bridge, there are no additional steps you need to take. You can generate a certified pdf of your passport to present at an emergency site. Health care entities can add registrants to their provider list, pull Provider Bridge passports, and contact providers (unless a licensee chooses to opt out of allowing entities to find their profile). In the event of a national or state emergency, an entity can reach out to providers to determine if they are available and willing to provide health care services.

For more information, go to <https://www.providerbridge.org/> or contact:

Anne K. Lawler, JD, RN

Provider Bridge Program Officer  
(208) 331-2341  
[alawler@fsmb.org](mailto:alawler@fsmb.org)

## Scam Calls Targeting Licensees

The Board is aware of numerous scam calls to licensees posing as law enforcement officers, agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), or Board staff. The scammers attempt a myriad of tactics in an attempt to extort money from licensees. For example, scammers, posing as law enforcement will attempt to say there is a warrant for your arrest. Scammers posing as DEA agents or Board staff attempt to say that your license or authority to prescribe controlled substances is suspended. The scammers then provide an “Agreement” that if a bond of \$25,000.00 is paid, the license would be reinstated.

The scammers’ phone number may show up as the Board’s number (701) 450-4060, or, if posing as law enforcement, they may impersonate actual law enforcement officers using their real names.

Please note, law enforcement officers, DEA agents, and Board staff will never contact licensees by telephone to demand money or any other form of payment. If you receive one of these calls, refuse the demand for payment, and hang up. If the caller insists that they speak with you, tell them you will call them back directly. Do not call back a different number provided by the scammers, instead, call the Board office directly at (701) 450-4060.

If the caller is stating they are from the DEA, consider reporting the threat using the [DEA’s Extortion Scam Online Reporting form](#).

If the phone number of the caller appears to be the Board’s number, you may submit an online complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) using the [FCC's Consumer Complaint form](#).

## Refer a Child to with Make-A-Wish® North Dakota

At Make-A-Wish North Dakota, we create life changing wishes for children ages 2 ½ to 18 years old who have a critical illness that puts their life in jeopardy. Medical professionals are one of our main referral sources to connect children with their wish come true. If you know a child with a critical illness, we invite you to refer them today by visiting [md.wish.org](http://md.wish.org). In addition to our referral form, you will also find our medical guidance sheets regarding eligibility within sub-specialty departments. Thank you!

## DEA Removes Waiver Requirement to Prescribe Buprenorphine

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 was signed by Congress on December 29, 2022, removing the federal requirement for practitioners to submit a Notice of Intent (have a waiver) to prescribe medications, such as buprenorphine, for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). Instead, all prescriptions for buprenorphine only require a standard DEA registration number. The Act also introduced new training requirements for all prescribers which will go into effect June 21, 2023. Additional information on these requirements will soon be available from the DEA. For more information, please visit [SAMHSA - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#).

## NDBOM Collaboration with ACCME

Physicians can now have CME providers report CME credit for North Dakota licensees directly to the ACCME Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS). All that is required of physicians is to request your CME provider to report your

attendance. A report is then submitted to the Board certifying attendance. This will streamline CME audits, allowing physicians to utilize the ACCME database instead of self-reporting individual CME during an audit. Physicians may also create their own account at the ACCME's CME Passport: <https://www.cmepassport.org> which will allow you to find available CME, track what CME credits have been reported by providers, and generate a transcript of your credit that can be sent directly to the Board. To learn more, please access the ACCME website at <https://www.accme.org/state-medical-licensing-boards-collaboration>. For more information on the CME Passport, please access: <https://accme.org/about-cmepassport>.

## INFORMATIONAL LINKS:

### **CDC's Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids 2022:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p1103-Prescribing-Opioids.html>

### **Interstate Medical Licensing Compact:**

<https://www.imlcc.org>

### **FBI Information on Wire Fraud Scheme against Health Care providers:**

<https://files.constantcontact.com/4487d704801/038c165a-5863-4b69-8630-b461754c7cc7.pdf>



North Dakota is the proud recipient of the WellBeing First Champion for the second year in a row by ALL IN; WellBeing First- verifying that the Board of Medicine's applications are free from intrusive and stigmatizing language around mental health care and treatment so practitioners can seek needed care without fear of losing their license.