

VisaScreen guidelines for Henry Ford Health team members

Note: VisaScreen renewals are taking up to six months, and expedited processing is not guaranteed to be available. All Henry Ford Health team members requiring a VisaScreen renewal should be sure to submit their VisaScreen renewal application six months before their current VisaScreen expires.

What is a VisaScreen?

Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 requires specific healthcare professionals to complete a screening program before they can receive either a permanent or temporary occupational visa, including TN or H-1B status. A VisaScreen is a comprehensive screening service for certain foreign national healthcare professionals seeking an occupational visa to work in the United States.

VisaScreens are valid for five years from the issue date. All foreign nationals requiring a VisaScreen for their work in the United States, must have a valid VisaScreen every time they enter the United States. The VisaScreen itself is not a work authorization document. It is a document required to be admitted into the United States to work in a temporary or permanent visa status.

Who is required to get a VisaScreen?

All foreign nationals seeking an occupational visa (e.g., TN, H-1B) to enter the United States to perform the below occupations are required to have a valid VisaScreen every time they enter the United States.

- Registered nurses
- Physical therapists
- Physician assistants
- Occupational therapists

- Audiologists
- Speech language pathologists
- Clinical laboratory technicians / medical laboratory technicians
- Clinical laboratory scientists / medical laboratory technologists

Lawful permanent residents and citizens of the United States are not required to have a valid VisaScreen.

How to apply for a VisaScreen

All foreign nationals requiring a VisaScreen may apply through one of two entities, CGFNS or Josef Silny & Associates.

Physical Therapists requiring a VisaScreen can either apply through CGFNS or the FCCPT website.

Physical therapists who have a certificate from FCCPT should note the following.

- These VisaScreens are only valid for five years, despite having no formal expiration date listed on them.
- FCCPT no longer issues Type II certificates. If you have a Type II certificate, you should immediately begin the process of obtaining a Type I certificate from FCCPT or a VisaScreen from CGFNS.

When can I file my VisaScreen renewal application?

VisaScreen renewal applications can be filed up to six months prior to the expiration date. Since VisaScreen application processing times are continuing to increase, in some cases up to six months, it is important to **file your renewal application as soon as you are eligible** to do so, which is six months prior to the expiration date.

Can I expedite my VisaScreen renewal?

Both CGFNS and Josef Silny & Associates have an Expedited Review Service, but your renewal can only be placed in expedited processing if you have an active VisaScreen order and all your required documents have been received, entered and imaged. CGFNS limits their online Expedited Review Service to 20 applicants at a time.

Since expedited processing is not guaranteed, HFHS employees requiring a VisaScreen should submit their VisaScreen renewal application six months before the expiration of their current VisaScreen.

How do I know when my VisaScreen expires?

VisaScreens are valid for **five years** from the “Issued” date listed on your current VisaScreen.

We recommend that you set a calendar reminder for yourself four years from the issue date as a reminder that you will need to submit your VisaScreen renewal application soon and another reminder four years and four months from the issue date to submit your VisaScreen renewal application.

I live in Canada and commute daily to work in the United States. What happens if my current VisaScreen expires before I receive my new VisaScreen?

If a VisaScreen is required for your occupation, a Customs and Border Protection officer can refuse to admit you to the United States to go to work if your VisaScreen has expired — even if your TN work authorization has not expired.

If you reside in Canada and commute to the United States for work, and your current VisaScreen expires before you receive a new one, you are allowed to stay in the States at a hotel or with family/friends until your new VisaScreen is issued.

I live in the United States. What happens if my current VisaScreen expires before I receive my new VisaScreen?

If you live in the United States, you can continue working as long as your work visa (TN, H-1B, etc.) has not expired — even if your VisaScreen has expired. The VisaScreen is an admissibility document that you are required to present only when crossing the border to seek entry into the United States. If you leave the States and try to reenter with an expired VisaScreen, you will be refused entry until you obtain a new VisaScreen.

Is there a “grace period” that allows me to enter the United States after my VisaScreen has expired?

No. If your VisaScreen has expired, you are inadmissible to the United States under U.S. immigration. Some Customs Border Patrol (CBP) officers may exercise their discretion to grant individuals a temporary “parole” period. This would allow you to continue crossing the border with an expired VisaScreen document while your VisaScreen renewal application is pending. A CBP officer is not required to offer a parole period in this situation, and most do not. Even if a parole period is offered, a CBP officer has full discretion to set the duration of the period and may revoke it at any time for any reason or no reason.

Since the decision of whether to grant a parole period and for how long is wholly within the discretion of the CBP officer (most of whom are much less lenient under the current administration), you should not count on receiving a parole if you let your VisaScreen lapse. Rather, you should submit your VisaScreen renewal application six months prior to the expiration date to avoid this situation.

Will I receive a reminder to renew my VisaScreen?

No, it is your responsibility to keep track of your VisaScreen expiration and file your renewal application in a timely manner. Please note that CBP may erroneously admit you even if your VisaScreen is expired, but once they notice your expired VisaScreen, they can refuse your entry into the United States until your new VisaScreen is issued.

Avoid losing your ability to work in the United States

If you are required to have a valid VisaScreen for your healthcare work in the United States, it is extremely important to submit your renewal application six months before the expiration of your current VisaScreen.

Henry Ford Health greatly values the incredible work you perform for our patients, and we urge you to monitor your VisaScreen expiration closely and file your renewal application on time to avoid any work interruptions due to VisaScreen expiration issues.