

Physician Duties Delegated to Physician Assistant



Background

[Senate Bill 16-158 \(SB 158\)](#) passed the Colorado General Assembly during the 2016 session in order to more accurately reflect current practice by physician assistants (PA) in conjunction with physicians. The Colorado Academy of Physician Assistants spearheaded the bill in order to improve efficiency for their members as a key part of the physician-led team. The legislation was intended to alleviate duplicative paperwork between PAs and physicians and create more streamlined and efficient settings while still protecting patient safety.

What You Need to Know

The bill clarifies and expands the duties that a physician may delegate to a PA within his or her scope of practice, including allowing PAs to:

- Issue certain statements verifying a medical condition;
- Obtain Level I accreditation in workers' compensation matters; and
- Qualify as providing direct access to a health care provider under health insurance plans.

CHA worked directly with the proponents to clarify the intent of the bill and ensure hospitals are not required to take on any additional burdens. Specifically, proponents argued that Colorado statute mandated archaic practices especially surrounding electronic prescriptions. According to testimony, many electronic medical record systems do not allow for the inclusion of a supervising physician's name on a prescription written by a PA. Many patients were experiencing prescription rejections and longer wait times to ensure compliance with the law. As enacted, prescriptions will no longer require the supervising physician's name, but they will need to include the facility's name and address. More specifically, the name and address of a specialty clinic is required if the health facility is part of a multi-facility organization.

Additional Resources

- [SB 158 Fiscal Note](#)
- SB 135 took effect on Aug. 10, 2016. Rules are forthcoming from the Colorado Medical Board.

For questions or more information, contact Amber Burkhart, CHA policy analyst, at 720.330.6028.