



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

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Thank you for your inquiry concerning what duties are delegable to medical assistants under Colorado law.

Section 12-36-106(3)(L) of the Colorado Medical Practice Act gives the physician broad latitude in determining what tasks are delegable to medical assistants:

Under the personal and responsible direction and supervision of a person licensed under the laws of this State to practice medicine, a license to practice medicine is not required for the rendering of services, other than the prescribing of drugs, by persons qualified by experience, education, or training. Nothing in this exemption, however, shall be deemed to extend or limit the scope of any license, and this exemption shall not apply to persons otherwise qualified to practice medicine but not licensed to so practice in this State.

It is my legal opinion that this language permits physicians to delegate a reasonable scope of clinical and administrative tasks (including measuring vital signs, venipuncture/phlebotomy, and administering intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections [including immunizations/vaccinations]) to knowledgeable and competent medical assistants working under their direct authority in outpatient settings. Tasks which constitute the practice of medicine, or which state law permits only certain health care professionals to perform, or which require the exercise of independent professional judgment or the making of clinical assessments, evaluations, or interpretations, however, may not be delegated to unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants.

I have also attached Rule 800 of the Colorado Board of Medical Examiners for additional information.

To my knowledge, there is nothing in Colorado law which forbids supervising physician(s) from delegating tasks to medical assistants through intermediary personnel, such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, or other individuals capable of undertaking subdelegatory responsibility.

Although the nurse practice act and the attendant regulations of the board of nursing govern what nursing tasks can be delegated by nurses to unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants, the medical practice act and the attendant regulations of the board of medical examiners govern what tasks can be delegated by physicians to unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants working under their authority in an outpatient setting.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or need additional assistance.

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