

BOARD'S POSITION ON SUPERVISION OF
MEDICAL ASSISTANTS
Adopted February 3, 2010

The New Hampshire Board of Medicine ("Board") recognizes that Medical Assistants ("MAs") are an integral part of medical practice in New Hampshire and fulfill a vital role in the delivery of healthcare in New Hampshire. Unlike nurses, MAs do not hold a license to practice and are, therefore, not regulated by the State of New Hampshire or any other entity and this distinction must be recognized. The role of a licensed physician overseeing the work of MAs is important.

Increasingly, MAs have taken over roles beyond taking of vital signs, drawing blood, and administration services. They may be involved in giving injections, triage of patients, and other activities traditionally seen as nursing activities. Licensed physicians must be responsible for the quality of services provided by MAs.

The Board recommends that physicians review the charts and decisions of MAs involved in triage and other activities traditionally done by nurses, as the physician is the one ultimately responsible for those decisions. Moreover, the Board may discipline licensed physicians for the actions of their subordinate MAs.

The distinction between a nurse and a MA is one patients may not think about or may not be aware of and often do not recognize. MAs should be instructed they must inform patients that they are MAs when a patient, a drug rep. or other person incorrectly identified the MA as a nurse.

Recognition of the distinction between a licensed nurse and an unlicensed MA is of concern to the NH Board of Nursing. Formal or informal policies in an office setting to ensure the establishment of that distinction are appropriate when employing MAs in roles that may be mistaken for nursing positions.