



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

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Thank you for your inquiry concerning what tasks are delegable legally to medical assistants according to Oregon law.

The Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), 677.505(2), states the following:

ORS 677.495 (Definitions for ORS 677.495 to 677.545) and 677.505 (Application of provisions governing physician assistants to other health professions) to 677.525 (Fees) do not require an employee of a person licensed to practice medicine under this chapter, or of a medical clinic or hospital to be licensed under ORS 677.495 (Definitions for ORS 677.495 to 677.545) and 677.505 (Application of provisions governing physician assistants to other health professions) to 677.525 (Fees), unless the employee is practicing as a physician assistant in which case the individual shall be licensed under ORS 677.495 (Definitions for ORS 677.495 to 677.545) and 677.505 (Application of provisions governing physician assistants to other health professions) to 677.525 (Fees).

It is my legal opinion that this language authorizes physicians to delegate to knowledgeable and competent unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants working under their direct/onsite supervision in outpatient settings a reasonable scope of tasks and duties (including performing venipuncture; administering intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections—including immunizations/vaccinations); performing EKGs; assisting the physician with patient examinations; and verbatim transmitting of orders that have been issued and approved by the supervising physicians [as specifically directed by the physician]).

I define triage as a communication process with a patient (or patient representative) during which a health care professional is required to exercise independent clinical judgment and/or to make clinical assessments or evaluations. It is my legal opinion that it is not permissible for medical assistants to be delegated triage (as I define the term). I define non-triage communication as a process during which a non-provider health care professional follows provider-approved protocols or decision trees in verbatim receiving and verbatim conveying of information. In non-triage communication, the health professional does not exercise independent clinical judgment. It is my legal opinion that it is permissible for knowledgeable and competent unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants to be delegated non-triage communication.

Tasks which constitute the practice of medicine, or which state law permits only certain health care professionals to perform, however, may not be delegated to unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants.

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