



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 Rhode Island law.

Rhode Island General Laws 5-54-3, Exemptions, reads in part as follows:

The provisions of this chapter [requiring physician assistants to be licensed in order to practice] do not apply to services performed in any of the following areas:

...

(5) Technicians, or other assistants or employees of physicians who perform delegated tasks in the office of a physician but who are not rendering services as physician assistant or identifying themselves as a physician assistant.

It is my legal opinion that common law legal principles inherent in state licensure permit physicians to delegate a reasonable scope of clinical and administrative tasks (including performing venipuncture; administering intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections—including immunizations/vaccinations) to knowledgeable and competent unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants working under their direct/onsite supervision in outpatient settings. 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 medical assistants.

The Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline has issued a document entitled *Guidelines Regarding Scope of Practice, Supervision, and Minimum Expectations of Conduct of Medical Assistants*. It is attached.

To my knowledge, there is nothing in Rhode Island law that forbids supervising physician(s) from delegating tasks to medical assistants through licensed professionals such as physician assistants, nurse practitioners, or registered nurses.

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