



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

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Thank you for your inquiry concerning what duties are delegable to medical assistants according to Kentucky law.

My research has not revealed any language in Kentucky statutes or regulations that addresses specifically what physicians are permitted to delegate to medical assistants. Nevertheless, it is my legal opinion that common law principles inherent in state licensure authorize physicians to delegate a reasonable scope of administrative and clinical tasks (including entering verbatim into the computerized provider order entry (CPOE) system the physician's medication/prescription, laboratory, and diagnostic imaging orders; venipuncture/phlebotomy; measuring vital signs; collecting certain laboratory specimens; and 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 licensed 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.

Because medical assistants are not specifically mentioned in the Kentucky Medical Practice Act or the regulations of the KY Board of Medical Examiners, the Board does not have direct jurisdiction over the scope of practice of medical assistants. However, the Board does have indirect jurisdiction because it can limit what physicians are permitted to delegate to medical assistants.

Kentucky law permits physicians to assign to other providers (e.g., nurse practitioners and physician assistants) and certain licensed health care professionals (e.g., registered nurses) to supervise medical assistants who are performing tasks delegated to them by the overseeing/delegating physician(s).

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a regulation stating that only "credentialed medical assistants" (in addition to licensed health care professionals) are permitted to enter orders into the CPOE system for meaningful use calculation purposes under the Medicaid Incentive Program.

Please let me know whether you have any specific questions about medical assisting scope of practice under Kentucky law.

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