



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

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Thank you for your inquiry concerning what tasks are delegable to medical assistants under Indiana law.

According to 25-22.5-1-2, Section 2(a) of the Indiana statutes, the provisions relating to the unlawful or unauthorized practice of medicine or osteopathic medicine shall not apply to:

(20) an employee of a physician or group of physicians who performs an act, a duty, or a function that is customarily within the specific area of practice of the employing physician or group of physicians, if the act, duty or function is performed under the direction and supervision of the employing physician or a physician of the employing group within whose area of practice the act, duty or function falls. An employee may not make a diagnosis or prescribe a treatment...An employee may not administer medication without the specific order of the employing physician of the employing group.

It is my legal opinion that this language authorizes physicians to delegate a reasonable scope of clinical and administrative tasks (including venipuncture/phlebotomy, administering intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections [including immunizations/vaccinations], conveying information verbatim as directed by the delegating physician, transmitting verbatim the physician's prescription/medication orders as directed by the delegating physician after review and approval by the physician) to knowledgeable and competent unlicensed professionals such as medical assistants working under their 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.

Medical assistants work under the direct authority of a physician (or physicians) in an outpatient setting. Thus, the supervising/delegating/overseeing physician is responsible legally for any negligent acts by the medical assistant in performing tasks delegated by the physician. The medical assistant is also responsible for any of her/his negligent acts.

To my knowledge, there is nothing in Indiana law which forbids supervising physicians 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. It is advisable to have the supervising physician authorize in writing which tasks are being delegated to the medical assistants, and which health professionals are being assigned by the physician to oversee the medical assistants.

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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