



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS

20 N. WACKER DR., STE. 1575
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606

website: www.aama-ntl.org

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

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

ORS 677.495 and 677.505 to 677.530 do not require an employee of a person licensed to practice medicine under this chapter, or of a medical clinic or hospital, to be registered under ORS 677.495 and 677.505 to 677.525, unless the employee is employed as a physician assistant....

It is my legal opinion that this language authorizes physicians to delegate certain clinical procedures (including venipuncture; administration of medication (including by means of **injections**); EKGs; assisting the physician with patient examinations; inserting urinary catheters; drafting, documenting, and transmitting orders to be signed by the supervising physician(s)) to unlicensed allied health personnel such as medical assistants.

Although the legality of the delegation of telephone screening is not specifically addressed in Oregon law, it is my legal judgment that telephone screening which is specifically authorized in writing by the supervising physician, requires the medical assistant to follow set protocols established by the physician, and does not require independent professional judgment can be delegated by a physician to a knowledgeable and competent medical assistant.

Although the nurse practice act and the attendant regulations of the board of nursing govern what **nursing** duties can be delegated by nurses to unlicensed personnel, the medical practice act and the attendant regulations of the board of medical examiners govern what procedures can be delegated by a **licensed physician to unlicensed employees** such as medical assistants.

Procedures which constitute the practice of medicine, or which state law **specifically and unambiguously** permits only certain licensed allied health care professionals to perform, however, may not be delegated to unlicensed personnel such as medical assistants.

I have enclosed the entry-level competencies taught in medical assisting programs accredited by CAAHEP, and the *Content Outline* of the CMA (AAMA) Certification Examination. Although these documents do not have the force of law, they should offer some guidance on scope of practice.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or need additional assistance.

Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA
Executive Director, Legal Counsel



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