

FAPA Knocks Down Even More Barriers to PA Practice

PA scope of practice is based on a supervising physician's delegation decisions and the training and experience of the PA. The supervising physician is in the best position to evaluate the PA's abilities and to delegate procedures and services that are appropriate to both the PA and the nature of the practice.

Yet for years, the Florida Administrative Code (FAC), which serves to implement the law, has expressly prohibited PAs from practicing in certain ways under both direct and indirect supervision. For instance, the FAC restricts PAs from issuing a "final diagnosis." This provision undermines the ability of a PA to practice medicine. Additionally, the FAC states that PAs cannot oversee cardiac stress tests unless their supervising physician is present. These are just two examples of an antiquated system of rules that needed to be changed.

That's why YOUR Academy challenged the validity of these restrictions and succeeded in its efforts to remove these burdensome barriers from the Florida Administrative Code.

Effective immediately, PAs may be delegated the authority to **issue a final diagnosis and perform the following duties without a supervising physician present, i.e. under "indirect supervision"**:

1. Routine insertion of chest tubes and removal of pacer wires or left atrial monitoring lines.
2. Performance of cardiac stress testing.
3. Routine insertion of central venous catheters.
4. Injection of intrathecal medication without prior approval of the supervising physician.
5. Interpretation of laboratory tests, X-ray studies and EKGs without the supervising physician interpretation and final review.
6. Administration of general, spinal, and epidural anesthetics; this may be performed under direct supervision only by physician assistants who graduated from Board-approved programs for the education of anesthesiology assistants.

The Academy could not have succeeded without the leadership of FAPA member and PA Council Chair Jeff Hulley. Florida Academy of Physician Assistants' Board-legal-counsel Allen Grossman, Lobbyist Corinne Mixon, and Legislative Executive Committee (chaired by Dayne Alonso and Rick Morales) have been working tirelessly to effect these rules changes for more than a year. We are pleased to report that our diligence paid off.

The Academy continues to celebrate a monumental year of victories. Please contact your fellow PAs who are not FAPA members and let them know what YOUR Academy is achieving on their behalf. They must join now if we want this momentum to continue!