



Changes in the Physician Assistant World

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The Physician Assistant world has been very busy in our state and nationally as well. Let me fill you in! The new PA rules regarding practice have been discussed here before. In summary:

- Name change from 'delegation agreement' to 'practice agreement'. The practice agreement will be retained at the site where the PA-physician (MD/DO) practice and filed with the WMC. There is no longer a requirement that a practice agreement be approved by the WMC.
- Doing away with having to have a separate remote site practice plan.
- Chapter 18.57A of the RCW regarding osteopathic physician assistants will go away. There will be just one set of laws and licensure governing physician assistants, found in chapter 18.71A RCW.

During the rules hearings, one of major areas of concern by anesthesiologists and nurse anesthetists was RCW language regarding the following:

"(3) It must be noted in the practice agreement that a physician assistant delivering general anesthesia or intrathecal anesthesia has completed an accredited anesthesiologist assistant program and received certification as an anesthesiologist assistant."

Rules are meant to be an interpretation of the RCW or law. Interested parties as stated above and the WA Academy of PA's along with the WMC Commissioners on the rules panel crafted this language which was accepted by all:

"(3) Pursuant to a practice agreement, a physician assistant may administer anesthesia, except the types of anesthesia described in subsection (4) of this section, without the personal presence of a supervising physician.

(4) Administration of general anesthesia or intrathecal anesthesia may be performed by a physician assistant with adequate education and training under direct supervision of a supervising anesthesiologist. Adequate education and training for administration of general or intrathecal anesthesia is defined as:

- (a) completion of an accredited anesthesiologist assistant program, or
- (b) Performance of general or intrathecal anesthesia clinical duties pursuant to a valid practice agreement prior to the adoption date of this section."

Of note, the WMC is only aware of one PA practicing in anesthesiology, under direct supervision in our state.

Chapter 18.57A of the RCW regarding osteopathic physician assistants will go away. There will be just one set of laws and licensure governing physician assistants, found in chapter 18.71A RCW.



Physician Assistant News

The next news comes from the American Academy of PAs (AAPA). During the 2021 House of Delegates (HOD) assembly, the AAPA, by a vote of 198 yeas to 68 nays, passed a resolution to affirm Physician Associate as the official title of the PA profession. The AAPA Board of Directors must now work on implementing this change which includes public education and rebranding of the Physician Assistant name. Stated in a letter to AAPA members, "Title change implementation is a complex and intricately interwoven undertaking requiring a thoughtful and well-timed strategy involving a variety of stakeholders – not only other national PA organizations (PAEA, NCCPA, and ARC-PA), PA programs, and AAPA constituent organizations, but also state and federal governments, regulators, and employers." The AAPA has made a FAQ page you can find here with more answers to your questions: [PA Title Change Investigation: FAQs - AAPA](#)

Lastly, this will likely be my last newsletter article as my second - four year appointment/term- on the WMC is coming to an end. I want to thank you all for reading my articles over the past years. There are 31 applicants for my position, the most we've ever had in my memory and I've been involved here off and on for about 20 years. We'll be reviewing applications over the next few weeks to choose the next Physician Assistant Commissioner to take my place.

My service to the WMC has been an honor as I represented Physician Assistants in our state through rule making, legislation, discipline, and the many other facets that being a commissioner brings with it. I could not have done it without the support of my family and friends, my fellow PA's including current Commissioner Jim Anderson, PA-C, the supportive physician and public members of the WMC, and lastly the FANTASTIC staff we have available to help, support, lead, and follow us through these sometimes complicated processes.

The WMC has changed for the better over the past few years and I'm proud to have been part of it! Thank you!

A webinar was held on June 16th regarding the **Changes in Physician Assistant Practice in Washington**. You can watch the video [here](#).

Supervision of Medical Assistants VIA Telemedicine

Starting April 14, 2021, providers may supervise their medical assistants during a telemedicine visit using interactive audio and video technology. The Legislature recently passed [House Bill 1378](#), enabling this practice.

Before this law, a health care practitioner had to be present on site while a medical assistant was performing tasks associated with a telemedicine visit. Now, physical presence in the same facility is no longer required during a telemedicine visit, so long as the other requirements regarding delegation are met.

Email any questions to medical.assistants@doh.wa.gov.

