

REFERENCE TITLE: physician assistants; qualifications

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-seventh Legislature
First Regular Session
2025

HB 2134

Introduced by
Representatives Bliss: Gillette, Willoughby

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 32-2501, 32-2504 AND 32-2521, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES;
RELATING TO THE ARIZONA REGULATORY BOARD OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 32-2501, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
3 read:

4 32-2501. Definitions

5 In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

6 1. "Active license" means a regular license issued pursuant to this
7 chapter.

8 2. "Adequate records" means legible medical records containing, at
9 a minimum, sufficient information to identify the patient, support the
10 diagnosis, justify the treatment, accurately document the results,
11 indicate advice and cautionary warnings provided to the patient and
12 provide sufficient information for another practitioner to assume
13 continuity of the patient's care at any point in the course of treatment.

14 3. "Advisory letter" means a nondisciplinary letter to notify a
15 physician assistant that either:

16 (a) While there is insufficient evidence to support disciplinary
17 action, the board believes that continuation of the activities that led to
18 the investigation may result in further board action against the licensee.

19 (b) The violation is a minor or technical violation that is not of
20 sufficient merit to warrant disciplinary action.

21 (c) While the licensee has demonstrated substantial compliance
22 through rehabilitation or remediation that has mitigated the need for
23 disciplinary action, the board believes that repetition of the activities
24 that led to the investigation may result in further board action against
25 the licensee.

26 4. "Approved program" means a physician assistant educational
27 program accredited by the accreditation review commission on education for
28 physician assistants, or one of its predecessor agencies, the committee on
29 allied health education and accreditation or the commission on the
30 accreditation of allied health educational programs.

31 5. "Board" means the Arizona regulatory board of physician
32 assistants.

33 6. "Collaborating physician or entity" means a physician, physician
34 group practice, physician private practice or licensed health care
35 institution that employs or collaborates with a physician assistant who
36 has at least eight thousand hours of clinical practice as certified by the
37 board pursuant to section 32-2536 and does not require a supervision
38 agreement and that designates one or more physicians by name or position
39 who ~~is responsible for the oversight of~~ COLLABORATE WITH the physician
40 assistant.

41 7. "Completed application" means an application for which the
42 applicant has supplied all required fees, information and correspondence
43 requested by the board on forms and in a manner acceptable to the board.

44 8. "Immediate family" means the spouse, natural or adopted
45 children, father, mother, brothers and sisters of the physician assistant

1 and the natural or adopted children, father, mother, brothers and sisters
2 of the physician assistant's spouse.

3 9. "Letter of reprimand" means a disciplinary letter that is issued
4 by the board and that informs the physician assistant that the physician
5 assistant's conduct violates state or federal law and may require the
6 board to monitor the physician assistant.

7 10. "Limit" means a nondisciplinary action that is taken by the
8 board and that alters a physician assistant's practice or medical
9 activities if there is evidence that the physician assistant is or may be
10 mentally or physically unable to safely engage in health care tasks.

11 11. "Medically incompetent" means that a physician assistant lacks
12 sufficient medical knowledge or skills, or both, in performing delegated
13 health care tasks to a degree likely to endanger the health or safety of
14 patients.

15 12. "Minor surgery":

16 (a) Means those invasive procedures that may be performed by a
17 physician assistant, that are consistent with the training and experience
18 of the physician assistant, that are normally taught in courses of
19 training approved by the board, that have been approved by the board as
20 falling within the scope of practice of a physician assistant and that are
21 consistent with the practice setting requirements of the physician
22 assistant.

23 (b) Does not include a surgical abortion.

24 13. "Physician" means a physician who is licensed pursuant to
25 chapter 13 or 17 of this title.

26 14. "Physician assistant" means a person who is licensed pursuant
27 to this chapter.

28 15. "Regular license" means a valid and existing license that is
29 issued pursuant to section 32-2521 to perform health care tasks.

30 16. "Restrict" means a disciplinary action that is taken by the
31 board and that alters a physician assistant's practice or medical
32 activities if there is evidence that the physician assistant is or may be
33 medically incompetent or guilty of unprofessional conduct.

34 17. "Supervising physician" means a physician who holds a current
35 unrestricted license, who supervises a physician assistant who has less
36 than eight thousand hours of clinical practice and who assumes legal
37 responsibility for health care tasks performed by the physician assistant.

38 18. "Supervision" means a physician's opportunity or ability to
39 provide or exercise direction and control over the services of a physician
40 assistant. Supervision does not require a physician's constant physical
41 presence if the supervising physician is or can be easily in contact with
42 the physician assistant by telecommunication.

43 19. "Supervision agreement" means a written or electronic signed
44 agreement that both:

1 (a) Describes the scope of practice for a physician assistant who
2 has less than eight thousand hours of clinical practice.

3 (b) Is between the physician assistant and a physician or the
4 physician assistant's employer that employs or has on medical staff at
5 least one physician who may provide oversight, as applicable, and who
6 holds a current unrestricted license. For the purposes of this
7 subdivision, "employer" means a physician, physician group practice,
8 physician private practice or licensed health care institution.

9 20. "Unprofessional conduct" includes the following acts by a
10 physician assistant that occur in this state or elsewhere:

11 (a) Violating any federal or state law or rule that applies to the
12 performance of health care tasks as a physician assistant. Conviction in
13 any court of competent jurisdiction is conclusive evidence of a violation.

14 (b) Claiming to be a physician or knowingly allowing another person
15 to represent that person as a physician.

16 (c) Performing health care tasks that do not meet the supervision
17 or collaboration requirements, as applicable, pursuant to section 32-2531.

18 (d) Exhibiting a pattern of using or being under the influence of
19 alcohol or drugs or a similar substance while performing health care tasks
20 or to the extent that judgment may be impaired and the ability to perform
21 health care tasks detrimentally affected.

22 (e) Signing a blank, undated or predated prescription form.

23 (f) Committing gross malpractice, repeated malpractice or any
24 malpractice resulting in the death of a patient.

25 (g) Representing that a manifestly incurable disease or infirmity
26 can be permanently cured or that a disease, ailment or infirmity can be
27 cured by a secret method, procedure, treatment, medicine or device, if
28 this is not true.

29 (h) Refusing to divulge to the board on demand the means, method,
30 procedure, modality of treatment or medicine used in treating a disease,
31 injury, ailment or infirmity.

32 (i) Prescribing or dispensing controlled substances or
33 prescription-only drugs for which the physician assistant is not approved
34 or in excess of the amount authorized pursuant to this chapter.

35 (j) Committing any conduct or practice that is or might be harmful
36 or dangerous to the health of a patient or the public.

37 (k) Violating a formal order, probation or stipulation issued by
38 the board.

39 (l) Failing to clearly disclose the person's identity as a
40 physician assistant in the course of the physician assistant's employment.

41 (m) Failing to use and affix the initials "P.A." or "P.A.-C." after
42 the physician assistant's name or signature on charts, prescriptions or
43 professional correspondence.

1 (n) Procuring or attempting to procure a physician assistant
2 license by fraud, misrepresentation or knowingly taking advantage of the
3 mistake of another.

4 (o) Having professional connection with or lending the physician
5 assistant's name to an illegal practitioner of any of the healing arts.

6 (p) Failing or refusing to maintain adequate records for a patient.

7 (q) Using controlled substances that have not been prescribed by a
8 physician, physician assistant, dentist or nurse practitioner for use
9 during a prescribed course of treatment.

10 (r) Prescribing or dispensing controlled substances to members of
11 the physician assistant's immediate family.

12 (s) Prescribing, dispensing or administering any controlled
13 substance or prescription-only drug for other than accepted therapeutic
14 purposes.

15 (t) Dispensing a schedule II controlled substance that is an
16 opioid, except as provided in section 32-2532.

17 (u) Knowingly making any written or oral false or fraudulent
18 statement in connection with the performance of health care tasks or when
19 applying for privileges or renewing an application for privileges at a
20 health care institution.

21 (v) Committing a felony, whether or not involving moral turpitude,
22 or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude. In either case, conviction by
23 a court of competent jurisdiction or a plea of no contest is conclusive
24 evidence of the commission.

25 (w) Having a certification or license refused, revoked, suspended,
26 limited or restricted by any other licensing jurisdiction for the
27 inability to safely and skillfully perform health care tasks or for
28 unprofessional conduct as defined by that jurisdiction that directly or
29 indirectly corresponds to any act of unprofessional conduct as prescribed
30 by this paragraph.

31 (x) Having sanctions including restriction, suspension or removal
32 from practice imposed by an agency of the federal government.

33 (y) Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, or
34 assisting in or abetting the violation of or conspiring to violate a
35 provision of this chapter.

36 (z) Using the term "doctor" or the abbreviation "Dr." on a name tag
37 or in a way that leads the public to believe that the physician assistant
38 is licensed to practice as an allopathic or osteopathic physician in this
39 state.

40 (aa) Failing to furnish legally requested information to the board
41 or its investigator in a timely manner.

42 (bb) Failing to allow properly authorized board personnel to
43 examine on demand documents, reports and records of any kind relating to
44 the physician assistant's performance of health care tasks.

1 (cc) Knowingly making a false or misleading statement on a form
2 required by the board or in written correspondence or attachments
3 furnished to the board.

4 (dd) Failing to submit to a body fluid examination and other
5 examinations known to detect the presence of alcohol or other drugs
6 pursuant to an agreement with the board or an order of the board.

7 (ee) Violating a formal order, probation agreement or stipulation
8 issued or entered into by the board or its executive director.

9 (ff) Except as otherwise required by law, intentionally betraying a
10 professional secret or intentionally violating a privileged communication.

11 (gg) Allowing the use of the licensee's name in any way to enhance
12 or allow the continuance of the activities of, or maintaining a
13 professional connection with, an illegal practitioner of medicine or the
14 performance of health care tasks by a person who is not licensed pursuant
15 to this chapter.

16 (hh) Committing false, fraudulent, deceptive or misleading
17 advertising by a physician assistant or the physician assistant's staff or
18 representative.

19 (ii) Knowingly failing to disclose to a patient on a form that is
20 prescribed by the board and that is dated and signed by the patient or
21 guardian acknowledging that the patient or guardian has read and
22 understands that the licensee has a direct financial interest in a
23 separate diagnostic or treatment agency or in nonroutine goods or services
24 that the patient is being prescribed and whether the prescribed treatment,
25 goods or services are available on a competitive basis. This subdivision
26 does not apply to a referral by one physician assistant to another
27 physician assistant or to a doctor of medicine or a doctor of osteopathic
28 medicine within a group working together.

29 (jj) With the exception of heavy metal poisoning, using chelation
30 therapy in the treatment of arteriosclerosis or as any other form of
31 therapy without adequate informed patient consent or without conforming to
32 generally accepted experimental criteria, including protocols, detailed
33 records, periodic analysis of results and periodic review by a medical
34 peer review committee, or without approval by the United States food and
35 drug administration or its successor agency.

36 (kk) Prescribing, dispensing or administering anabolic or
37 androgenic steroids for other than therapeutic purposes.

38 (ll) Prescribing, dispensing or furnishing a prescription
39 medication or a prescription-only device as defined in section 32-1901 to
40 a person unless the licensee first conducts a physical examination of that
41 person or has previously established a professional relationship with the
42 person. This subdivision does not apply to:

43 (i) A physician assistant who provides temporary patient care on
44 behalf of the patient's regular treating licensed health care
45 professional.

1 (ii) Emergency medical situations as defined in section 41-1831.

2 (iii) Prescriptions written to prepare a patient for a medical
3 examination.

4 (iv) Prescriptions written or antimicrobials dispensed to a contact
5 as defined in section 36-661 who is believed to have had significant
6 exposure risk as defined in section 36-661 with another person who has
7 been diagnosed with a communicable disease as defined in section 36-661 by
8 the prescribing or dispensing physician assistant.

9 (mm) Engaging in sexual conduct with a current patient or with a
10 former patient within six months after the last medical consultation
11 unless the patient was the licensee's spouse at the time of the contact
12 or, immediately preceding the professional relationship, was in a dating
13 or engagement relationship with the licensee. For the purposes of this
14 subdivision, "sexual conduct" includes:

15 (i) Engaging in or soliciting sexual relationships, whether
16 consensual or nonconsensual.

17 (ii) Making sexual advances, requesting sexual favors or engaging
18 in other verbal conduct or physical contact of a sexual nature with a
19 patient.

20 (iii) Intentionally viewing a completely or partially disrobed
21 patient in the course of treatment if the viewing is not related to
22 patient diagnosis or treatment under current practice standards.

23 (nn) Performing health care tasks under a false or assumed name in
24 this state.

25 Sec. 2. Section 32-2504, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
26 read:

27 32-2504. Powers and duties; delegation of authority; rules;
28 subcommittees; immunity

29 A. The board shall:

30 1. As its primary duty, protect the public from unlawful,
31 incompetent, unqualified, impaired or unprofessional physician assistants.

32 2. License **ONLY THOSE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT APPLICANTS WHO MEET ALL**
33 **OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CHAPTER** and regulate physician assistants
34 pursuant to this chapter.

35 3. Order and evaluate physical, psychological, psychiatric and
36 competency testing of licensees and applicants **AS** the board determines is
37 necessary to enforce this chapter.

38 4. Review the credentials and the abilities of applicants for
39 licensure **WHO MEET ALL OTHER LICENSING REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CHAPTER BUT**
40 whose professional records or physical or mental capabilities may not meet
41 the requirements of this chapter.

42 5. Initiate investigations and determine on its own motion whether
43 a licensee has engaged in unprofessional conduct or is or may be
44 incompetent or mentally or physically unable to safely perform health care
45 tasks.

1 6. Establish fees and penalties pursuant to section 32-2526.
2 7. Develop and recommend standards governing the profession.
3 8. Engage in the full exchange of information with the **PHYSICIAN**
4 **ASSISTANT** licensing and disciplinary boards and professional associations
5 of other states and jurisdictions of the United States and foreign
6 countries and a statewide association for physician assistants.
7 9. Direct the preparation and circulation of educational material
8 the board determines is helpful and proper for its licensees.
9 10. Discipline and rehabilitate physician assistants pursuant to
10 this chapter.
11 11. Certify physician assistants for thirty-day prescription
12 privileges for schedule II, schedule III, schedule IV and schedule V
13 controlled substances that are opioids or benzodiazepine and ninety-day
14 prescription privileges for schedule II, schedule III, schedule IV and
15 schedule V controlled substances that are not opioids or benzodiazepine if
16 the physician assistant either:
17 (a) Within the preceding three years of application, completed
18 forty-five hours in pharmacology or clinical management of drug therapy or
19 at the time of application is certified by a national commission on the
20 certification of physician assistants or its successor.
21 (b) Met any other requirement established by board rule.
22 B. The board may delegate to the executive director the board's
23 authority pursuant to this section or section 32-2551. The board shall
24 adopt a substantive policy statement pursuant to section 41-1091 for each
25 specific licensing and regulatory authority the board delegates to the
26 executive director.
27 C. The board may make and adopt rules necessary or proper for the
28 administration of this chapter.
29 D. The chairperson may establish subcommittees consisting of board
30 members and define their duties as the chairperson deems necessary to
31 carry out the functions of the board.
32 E. Board employees, including the executive director, temporary
33 personnel and professional medical investigators, are immune from civil
34 liability for good faith actions they take to enforce this chapter.
35 F. In performing its duties pursuant to subsection A of this
36 section, the board may receive and review staff reports on complaints,
37 malpractice cases and all investigations.
38 G. The chairperson and vice chairperson of the ~~Arizona regulatory~~
39 ~~board of physician assistants~~ are members of the committee on executive
40 director selection and retention established by section 32-1403,
41 subsection G, which is responsible for the appointment of the executive
42 director pursuant to section 32-1405.

1 Sec. 3. Section 32-2521, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to
2 read:

3 32-2521. Qualifications; investigations; disciplinary actions

4 A. An applicant for licensure shall:

5 1. Have graduated from a physician assistants educational program
6 ACCREDITED BY A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATION OF
7 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION AND approved by the board.

8 2. Pass a NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED certifying examination FOR
9 PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS approved by the board.

10 3. Be physically and mentally able to safely perform health care
11 tasks as a physician assistant.

12 4. Have a professional record that indicates that the applicant has
13 not committed any act or engaged in any conduct that constitutes grounds
14 for disciplinary action against a licensee pursuant to this chapter. This
15 paragraph does not prevent the board from considering the application of
16 an applicant who was the subject of disciplinary action in another
17 jurisdiction if the applicant's act or conduct was subsequently corrected,
18 monitored and resolved to the satisfaction of that jurisdiction's
19 regulatory board.

20 5. Not have had a license to practice revoked by a regulatory board
21 in another jurisdiction in the United States for an act that occurred in
22 that jurisdiction that constitutes unprofessional conduct pursuant to this
23 chapter.

24 6. Not be currently under investigation, suspension or restriction
25 by a regulatory board in another jurisdiction in the United States for an
26 act that occurred in that jurisdiction AND that constitutes unprofessional
27 conduct pursuant to this chapter. If the applicant is under investigation
28 by a regulatory board in another jurisdiction, the board shall suspend the
29 application process and may not issue or deny a license to the applicant
30 until the investigation is resolved.

31 7. Not have surrendered, relinquished or given up a license in lieu
32 of disciplinary action by a regulatory board in another jurisdiction in
33 the United States for an act that occurred in that jurisdiction AND that
34 constitutes unprofessional conduct pursuant to this chapter. This
35 paragraph does not prevent the board from considering the application of
36 an applicant who surrendered, relinquished or gave up a license in lieu of
37 disciplinary action by a regulatory board in another jurisdiction if that
38 regulatory board subsequently reinstated the applicant's license.

39 8. Have submitted verification of all hospital affiliations and
40 employment for the five years preceding application. Each hospital must
41 verify the applicant's affiliation or employment on the hospital's
42 official letterhead or the electronic equivalent.

43 B. The board shall require an applicant to have all credentials
44 submitted from the primary source where the document originated, either
45 electronically or by hard copy, except that the board may accept

1 primary-source verified credentials from a credentials verification
2 service approved by the board.

3 C. The board may make investigations it deems necessary to advise
4 itself with respect to the qualifications of the applicant, including
5 physical examinations, mental evaluations, written competency examinations
6 or any combination of these examinations and evaluations.

7 D. If the board finds that the applicant committed an act or
8 engaged in conduct that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action
9 in this state, before issuing a license the board must determine to its
10 satisfaction that the act or conduct has been corrected, monitored and
11 resolved. If the act or conduct has not been resolved, before issuing a
12 license the board must determine to its satisfaction that mitigating
13 circumstances exist that prevent ~~its~~ resolution OF THE ACT OR CONDUCT.

14 E. If another jurisdiction has taken disciplinary action against an
15 applicant, before issuing a license the board must determine to its
16 satisfaction that the cause for the action was corrected and the matter
17 was resolved. If the other jurisdiction has not resolved the matter,
18 before issuing a license the board must determine to its satisfaction that
19 mitigating circumstances exist that prevent ~~its~~ THE MATTER'S resolution.

20 F. The board may delegate to the executive director the authority
21 to deny licenses to applicants who do not meet the requirements of this
22 section.