



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

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

December 2015

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

Chapter 152, Section 152.1, 5, c of the Iowa statutes reads as follows:

5. The “practice of nursing” means the practice of a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse. It does not mean any of the following:

.....

c. The performance of services by unlicensed workers employed in offices, hospitals, or health care facilities, as defined in section 135C.1, under the supervision of a physician or a nurse licensed under this chapter...and when acting while within the scope of the employer’s license.

It is my legal opinion that the above statutory languages authorizes physicians to delegate a reasonable scope of clinical procedures (including venipuncture and the administration of intramuscular, intradermal, and subcutaneous injections—including immunizations/vaccinations), as well as verbatim transmission of prescription orders as specifically authorized by the supervising physician, to competent and knowledgeable medical assistants working under their direct supervision in outpatient settings.

To my knowledge, there is nothing in Iowa law which forbids supervising physician(s) from delegating procedures to medical assistants through intermediary personnel, such as resident physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, or other individuals capable of undertaking subdelegatory responsibility.

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, regardless of whether such delegation takes place in an ambulatory or in-patient setting.



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

I have enclosed *Occupational Analysis of the CMA (AAMA)*, 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.

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Chief Executive Officer, Legal Counsel



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