



November 14, 2016

NC Medical Care Commission
ATTN: Nadine Pfeiffer
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To the Members of the NC Medical Care Commission:

The North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants (NCAPA) represents the interests of over 5,000 clinically practicing physician assistants (PAs) in North Carolina.

NCAPA is respectfully asking for the Commission to consider a technical modification to (d) of the following rule. Currently, the rule incorrectly states “a physician’s assistant.” The apostrophe “s” should be removed and instead state: “a physician assistant.”

10A NCAC 13E .0601 ENROLLMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

...

- (d) A medical examination report signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or **physician's assistant**, completed within the prior three months, shall be obtained by the program at the time of enrollment. The report must be updated annually no later than the anniversary date of the initial report.”

Additionally, NCAPA is respectfully requesting the Commission to consider amending the following rules to include PAs. Nothing in the legislation, Ch. S.L. 2015-241, prevents PAs from carrying out these duties, and all of the below duties are within a PA’s scope of practice.

10A NCAC 13E .0312 OUTSIDE ENTRANCE AND EXITS

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- (g) In each overnight respite services program with at least one participant who is determined by a physician **or physician assistant** or is otherwise known to be disoriented or who wanders, each exit door for participant-use shall be equipped with a sounding device that is activated when the door is opened.

10A NCAC 13E .0601 ENROLLMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

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- (b) Any adult (18 years of age or over) who, because of a physical condition or mental disability, needs a substitute home for purpose of respite for the caregiver may be enrolled for overnight

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respite services when, in the opinion of the caregiver, family, participant, physician, **physician assistant**, or social worker and the administrator, the services and accommodations of the facility will meet the respite needs of the participant.

10A NCAC 13E .0602 PLANNING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

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- (k) The participant's responsible party or his designated representative shall be contacted and informed of the need to remove the participant from the program if one or more of the following conditions exists:
1. the participant's condition is such that he is a danger to himself, or poses a direct threat to the health of others, as documented by a physician **or physician assistant**;

10A NCAC 13E .0703 MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

- (a) Medications shall be administered according to current physician's **or a physician assistant's** orders and the participant's medication schedule. The medication schedule shall list all medications with dosages and times medications are to be administered.

10A NCAC 13E .0803 MENUS

...

- (f) The facility shall have a matching therapeutic diet menu for all physician-ordered **or physician assistant-ordered** therapeutic diets, for guidance of food service staff.

10A NCAC 13E .0805 THERAPEUTIC DIETS

- (a) All therapeutic diet orders, including thickened liquids, shall be in writing from the participant's physician **or physician assistant**.
- ...
- (c) The facility shall maintain an accurate and current listing of overnight respite participants with physician-ordered **or physician assistant-ordered** therapeutic diets for guidance of food service staff.

10A NCAC 13E .0901 ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

...

- (b) If there is a question about a participant's ability to participate in an activity, the participant, the participant's physician, **physician assistant**, family, or responsible party shall be consulted to obtain a statement regarding the participant's capabilities.

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, millions more Americans are now insured, with that number likely to increase for years to come. While it is beneficial to both individuals and society to have more people with health coverage, this new wave of consumers will exacerbate the already increasing physician shortage. As a result, the system will likely rely more on health professionals such as PAs, and

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more will be expected of them. Today, there are over 5,000 PAs practicing in North Carolina, and that number is expected to continue to climb each year.

The typical PA treats 3,500 patients and writes 2,600 to 5,200 prescriptions each year. Physician assistants can be found working in virtually every medical and surgical setting. Almost one-third of PAs practice in primary care, primarily family medicine, and another one-third of PAs practice in hospital settings. The remaining PAs practice in an assortment of settings, ranging from community health centers to nursing homes.

The Academy truly appreciates the Commission's consideration, and we look forward to working with the Commission to modify these rules to include licensed PAs. NCAPA strongly believes that in this ever-changing health care environment, it is essential to ensure that all of our state's health care providers are practicing to the fullest extent of their license.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Emily Adams, Executive Director of the NCAPA, at emily.adams@ncapa.org or (919) 479-1995.

Sincerely,

Wanda Hancock, PA-C
NCAPA President