

Physician Guide to the Supervision of Physician Assistants

Prepared by the NSLIJHS
Physician Assistant Leadership Council



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This module was created to assist you and upon completion you will be able to:

Explain your role and responsibilities in the supervision of a Licensed Physician Assistant.

Discuss the training ,on –boarding , scope of practice and the laws governing Physician Assistants.

Demonstrate an understanding of the Physician / Physician Assistant partnership and how it can be leveraged to benefit our patients and our practice.



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Physician Assistants are medical professionals trained at the graduate level to provide medical and surgical care under the scope of practice of the supervising physician.

PAs deliver care as part of a team based paradigm.

They practice medicine with varying levels of autonomy based on experience , on-going education and mentoring.



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PAs are authorized by the state to provide medical services under supervision of a physician. They include but are not limited to:

Medical histories

Physical exams

Diagnosis & treatment

Order & interpret tests

Counseling and Education

Assist in surgery

Prescribe medications

Order diagnostic and therapeutic procedures



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PA Education

Pre-requisites

Four years of undergraduate studies in basic and behavioral sciences; analogous to “premed” studies

Up to 2000 hours of direct patient care

Average GPA 3.4 , 3.6 in sciences

Acceptance rate; only 2% of applicants



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PA Education

Year 1

Modeled after the medical school curriculum

Anatomy & Physiology, Pharmacology, Clinical Medicine Units

Year 2

Over 2000 hours of clinical rotations in Medicine, Surgery and sub specialties

Year 3

Additional clinical rotations

Administrative skills

Research (Thesis presentation and defense)



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Procedures are proctored and recorded in a data tracking platform accessible to ARC-PA (Accreditation Review Commission for Education of Physician Assistants)

Procedures include but are not limited to:

- Interpreting routine imaging studies
- Rectal exams
- Pelvic exams
- Nasogastric tube placement
- Arterial blood sampling
- Writing orders
- Ordering medications
- Interpreting EKGs
- Suturing
- H&P's
- Consultations
- Injections
- Vascular access
- Bladder catheterization
- Suturing

PAs are licensed by the State Education Department and are subject to the rules and regulations of the Department of Health

PAs are appointed to the Allied Health Professional Staff and are subject to Medical Staff rules and regulations

Requisites for licensure.

Must have graduated a program accredited by ARC-PA

Passing score on the Certification Examination given by the National Commission for the Certification of PAs

Requisites for Privileges at NSHS

Recertification every 2 years with 100 hours of CME

Every ten years, 100 hours of CME for the prior two years and passing score on the national recertification exam

BLS renewal every 2 years

ACLS renewal every 2 years



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Laws, rules and regulations

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a physician assistant may perform medical services , but only when under the supervision of a physician, and only when such acts and duties as are assigned to him or her are within the scope of practice of such supervising physician”.

Physicians may supervise four physician assistants in his or her private practice and up to 6 in a hospital .



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“ Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a trainee in an approved program may perform medical services when such services are performed within the scope of such program”

“PAs may perform any task delegated to him / her by the supervising physician providing they are competent to perform such task and the task is not prohibited or protected by statute (eg. Optometry, Fluoroscopy)”

REFERENCE :NYS ED 131 b sections
6541,6542,PHL37040,CRR-NY 94.2



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While supervision must be continuous, the physician is not required to be on-site when services are delivered .This is known as *indirect supervision* .Other levels of supervision are *direct supervision* (physician on site) and *direct observation* (personal presence of the physician)

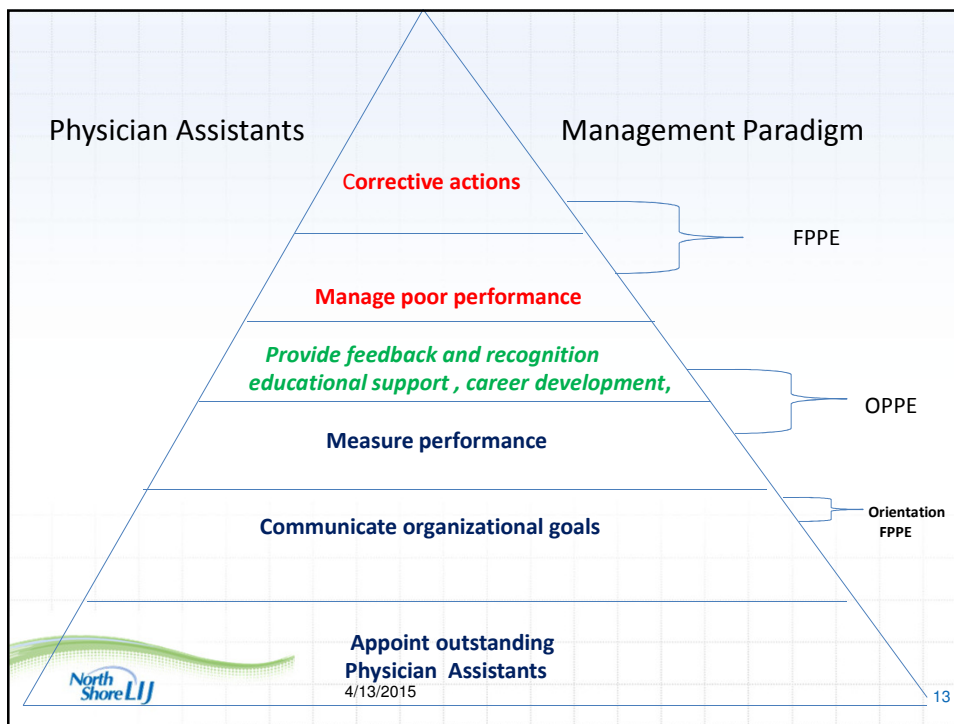
The PA has one primary supervising physician but may be supervised by multiple physicians depending on the clinical setting

The law does not require PA orders, prescriptions or notes to be countersigned



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ON Boarding FPPE

All NSHS PAs attend a 3 day "Orientation to Clinical Practice " at the Center for Learning and Innovation and the Patient Safety Institute. During this time skills may be validated using computerized learning modules and simulation. PAs also receive education related to processes and the mission of the health system

Additionally, all surgical PAs credentialed after January 2015 attend a 3 day "Peri-operative Orientation" at the Patient Safety Institute and bio-skills lab

The orientation process continues at their department where specialty specific Focused Professional Practice Evaluation is performed

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A PA will have one primary supervisor although the PA may be managing patients of several other attending physicians within the same scope of practice. In that case the attending physician of record becomes the supervisor for that particular case. While in the OR the attending surgeon will be the supervisor for that case

The Primary supervisor is responsible for overall performance of the PA and on-going professional practice evaluation (OPPE)

This OPPE occurs not less than twice per year and is based on interviews with the PA, objective quality data, conversations with and reports of other attending physicians the PA has worked with on the service



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Optimizing your experience supervising PAs.

- Have an open discussion with the new PA regarding their training and experience at the time you are filling out the Delineation of Privileges
- Share your DOP with the PA to maintain alignment in practice parameters
- Assure that there is an FPPE process for new privileges by checking with the PA Director at your site
- Create an environment of learning, mentoring, teaching
- Consider suggestions and recommendations from the PA
- Communicate your thoughts and decision making process



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Meet with the PA at least every 6 months for OPPE.

- Maintain a “just culture “ environment
- Create a team environment
- Review activity, training ,CME ,etc.
- Get feedback from other supervising physicians
- Make recommendations for professional development and acquisition of new skills
- Feel free to consult with the PA Director at your site regarding any concerns you may have about PAs under your supervision



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There are over 100,000 Certified PA s in the U.S. and 10,000 in NYS. The NSLIJ Health System has 1100 credentialed PAs in 21 specialties at 18 hospitals.

Each hospital has a PA site leader that can be a resource for physicians as regards PA practice.

Call the Medical Director at your site to contact the PA site leader.

PAs provide autonomous care which augments the care provided by physicians in a team-based physician led paradigm

Thank you for reviewing this module.



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