

## **SCOPE of PRACTICE**

### **CMA/RMA Student**

The utilization of medical assistants continues to increase and diversify. The scope of practice may vary from one institution to another. Questions concerning the scope of practice for the clinic assignment will need to be directed to the institution's human resource department and/or the Physician or Healthcare Provider. The American Association of Medical Assistants website provides a resource for questions regarding permissible scope of practice across the United States. [www.aama-mrl.org/CMAToday/archives/publicaffairs/detains.aspx?ArticleID=886](http://www.aama-mrl.org/CMAToday/archives/publicaffairs/detains.aspx?ArticleID=886)

**Scope of Practice General List provided from AAMA and most states.**

**In most states a medical assistant can:**

- Perform clinical and administrative tasks to keep the workflow going, if supervised by a physician or other health care practitioner.
- Determine the acuity of a visit and the visit length for appointment scheduling purposes using an office protocol provided by the supervising physician.
- Measure and record vital sign.
- Record patient demographics and basic information about the presenting and previous condition.
- Use medical terminology and accepted charting abbreviations.
- Escort patients to the exam room and prepare them for an exam
- Use scientific methods to solve problems and choose a mathematical method or formula to solve problems.
- Convey clinical information on behalf of the physician
- Arrange examining-room instruments and equipment.
- Change wound dressings and obtain wound cultures

- Remove sutures or staples from superficial incisions or lacerations
- Operate diagnostic equipment but cannot interpret tests.
- Provide patient information and instructions.
- Provide a single dose of oral medication as ordered by the physician to a patient for immediate self-administration under observation.
- Administer medications topically, sublingually, vaginally, rectally and by injection.
- Perform CPR and render First Aid in an emergency
- Prepare patients for examination, including draping, shaving, and disinfecting treatment sites.
- Perform aseptic procedures such as wound care.
- Collect blood specimens via capillary and venipuncture technique.
- Obtain specimens by noninvasive techniques, such as wound cultures.
- Perform simple laboratory and screening test customarily performed STAT in a medical office, such as urinalysis.
- Administer different types of cryotherapy to reduce pain or swelling.
- Filing and bookkeeping
- Process insurance claims
- Transcribe medical dictation for medical records. Call in prescription orders or refills to the pharmacy, but only as ordered and approved by physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant.

**The sites used for this information warns that medical assistants CANNOT:**

- Independently perform telephone triage (medical assistants are not legally authorized to interpret data or diagnose symptoms)   
Independently diagnose or treat patients.
- Independently prescribe medications Independently give out medication samples Independently refill prescription requests.
- Independently do triage
- Inject medications into a vein (most states) unless permitted by law.

- Start, flush, or discontinue IV's (most states) unless permitted by state law.
- Provide medical treatment, analyze, or interpret test results.
- Advise patients about their condition or treatment regimen
- Make assessments or perform any kind of medical care decision making.
- Administer any anesthetic agent (except topical numbing agents such as EMLA cream)
- Perform test that involve the penetration of human tissues except for skin tests and drawing blood as provided by law.
- Interpret the results of blood or skin tests.  Operate laser equipment.

### Reference

Buppert, C. (2008). Understanding Medical Assistant Practice Liability Issues. Medscape, 4. Retrieved April 5, 2013. From <http://www.medscape.com>

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