

CHAPTER 2016-125

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 375

An act relating to physician assistants; amending s. 458.347, F.S.; revising circumstances under which a physician assistant may prescribe medication; authorizing a licensed physician assistant to perform certain services as delegated by a supervising physician; revising physician assistant licensure and license renewal requirements; removing a requirement for letters of recommendation; deleting provisions related to examination by the Department of Health; amending s. 459.022, F.S.; revising circumstances under which a physician assistant may prescribe medication; authorizing a licensed physician assistant to perform certain services as delegated by a supervising physician; revising physician assistant licensure and license renewal requirements; removing a requirement for letters of recommendation; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (e) of subsection (4) of section 458.347, Florida Statutes, is amended, paragraph (h) is added to that subsection, present paragraphs (c) through (h) of subsection (7) are redesignated as paragraphs (b) through (g), respectively, and present paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (f) of that subsection are amended, to read:

458.347 Physician assistants.—

(4) PERFORMANCE OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.—

(e) A supervising ~~supervisory~~ physician may delegate to a fully licensed physician assistant the authority to prescribe or dispense any medication used in the supervising ~~supervisory~~ physician's practice unless such medication is listed on the formulary created pursuant to paragraph (f). A fully licensed physician assistant may only prescribe or dispense such medication under the following circumstances:

1. A physician assistant must clearly identify to the patient that he or she is a physician assistant. Furthermore, the physician assistant must inform the patient that the patient has the right to see the physician ~~before~~ before ~~prior to~~ any prescription ~~is being~~ prescribed or dispensed by the physician assistant.

2. The supervising ~~supervisory~~ physician must notify the department of his or her intent to delegate, on a department-approved form, before delegating such authority and notify the department of any change in prescriptive privileges of the physician assistant. Authority to dispense may be delegated only by a supervising physician who is registered as a dispensing practitioner in compliance with s. 465.0276.

3. The physician assistant must acknowledge with file ~~with the department a signed affidavit~~ that he or she has completed a minimum of 10 continuing medical education hours in the specialty practice in which the physician assistant has prescriptive privileges with each licensure renewal application.

4. The department may issue a prescriber number to the physician assistant granting authority for the prescribing of medicinal drugs authorized within this paragraph upon completion of the foregoing requirements. The physician assistant shall not be required to independently register pursuant to s. 465.0276.

5. The prescription may ~~must be written in paper or electronic~~ a form but must comply that complies with ss. 456.0392(1) and 456.42(1) and chapter 499 and must contain, in addition to the supervising supervisory physician's name, address, and telephone number, the physician assistant's prescriber number. Unless it is a drug or drug sample dispensed by the physician assistant, the prescription must be filled in a pharmacy permitted under chapter 465 and must be dispensed in that pharmacy by a pharmacist licensed under chapter 465. The appearance of the prescriber number creates a presumption that the physician assistant is authorized to prescribe the medicinal drug and the prescription is valid.

6. The physician assistant must note the prescription or dispensing of medication in the appropriate medical record.

(h) A licensed physician assistant may perform services delegated by the supervising physician in the physician assistant's practice in accordance with his or her education and training unless expressly prohibited under this chapter, chapter 459, or rules adopted under this chapter or chapter 459.

(7) PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE.—

(a) Any person desiring to be licensed as a physician assistant must apply to the department. The department shall issue a license to any person certified by the council as having met the following requirements:

1. Is at least 18 years of age.

2. Has satisfactorily passed a proficiency examination by an acceptable score established by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. If an applicant does not hold a current certificate issued by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and has not actively practiced as a physician assistant within the immediately preceding 4 years, the applicant must retake and successfully complete the entry-level examination of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants to be eligible for licensure.

3. Has completed the application form and remitted an application fee not to exceed \$300 as set by the boards. An application for licensure made by a physician assistant must include:

- a. A certificate of completion of a physician assistant training program specified in subsection (6).
- b. Acknowledgment ~~A sworn statement~~ of any prior felony convictions.
- c. Acknowledgment ~~A sworn statement~~ of any previous revocation or denial of licensure or certification in any state.
- d. ~~Two letters of recommendation.~~
- e. A copy of course transcripts and a copy of the course description from a physician assistant training program describing course content in pharmacotherapy, if the applicant wishes to apply for prescribing authority. These documents must meet the evidence requirements for prescribing authority.

~~(b)1. Notwithstanding subparagraph (a)2. and sub-subparagraph (a) 3.a., the department shall examine each applicant who the Board of Medicine certifies:~~

~~a. Has completed the application form and remitted a nonrefundable application fee not to exceed \$500 and an examination fee not to exceed \$300, plus the actual cost to the department to provide the examination. The examination fee is refundable if the applicant is found to be ineligible to take the examination. The department shall not require the applicant to pass a separate practical component of the examination. For examinations given after July 1, 1998, competencies measured through practical examinations shall be incorporated into the written examination through a multiple-choice format. The department shall translate the examination into the native language of any applicant who requests and agrees to pay all costs of such translation, provided that the translation request is filed with the board office no later than 9 months before the scheduled examination and the applicant remits translation fees as specified by the department no later than 6 months before the scheduled examination, and provided that the applicant demonstrates to the department the ability to communicate orally in basic English. If the applicant is unable to pay translation costs, the applicant may take the next available examination in English if the applicant submits a request in writing by the application deadline and if the applicant is otherwise eligible under this section. To demonstrate the ability to communicate orally in basic English, a passing score or grade is required, as determined by the department or organization that developed it, on the test for spoken English (TSE) by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) by ETS, a high school or college level English course, or the English examination for citizenship, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. A notarized copy of an Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certificate may also be used to demonstrate the ability to communicate in basic English; and~~

~~b. Is an unlicensed physician who graduated from a foreign medical school listed with the World Health Organization who has not previously~~

~~taken and failed the examination of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and who has been certified by the Board of Medicine as having met the requirements for licensure as a medical doctor by examination as set forth in s. 458.311(1), (3), (4), and (5), with the exception that the applicant is not required to have completed an approved residency of at least 1 year and the applicant is not required to have passed the licensing examination specified under s. 458.311 or hold a valid, active certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates; was eligible and made initial application for certification as a physician assistant in this state between July 1, 1990, and June 30, 1991; and was a resident of this state on July 1, 1990, or was licensed or certified in any state in the United States as a physician assistant on July 1, 1990.~~

~~2.— The department may grant temporary licensure to an applicant who meets the requirements of subparagraph 1. Between meetings of the council, the department may grant temporary licensure to practice based on the completion of all temporary licensure requirements. All such administratively issued licenses shall be reviewed and acted on at the next regular meeting of the council. A temporary license expires 30 days after receipt and notice of scores to the licenseholder from the first available examination specified in subparagraph 1. following licensure by the department. An applicant who fails the proficiency examination is no longer temporarily licensed, but may apply for a one-time extension of temporary licensure after reapplying for the next available examination. Extended licensure shall expire upon failure of the licenseholder to sit for the next available examination or upon receipt and notice of scores to the licenseholder from such examination.~~

~~3.— Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the examination specified pursuant to subparagraph 1. shall be administered by the department only five times. Applicants certified by the board for examination shall receive at least 6 months' notice of eligibility prior to the administration of the initial examination. Subsequent examinations shall be administered at 1-year intervals following the reporting of the scores of the first and subsequent examinations. For the purposes of this paragraph, the department may develop, contract for the development of, purchase, or approve an examination that adequately measures an applicant's ability to practice with reasonable skill and safety. The minimum passing score on the examination shall be established by the department, with the advice of the board. Those applicants failing to pass that examination or any subsequent examination shall receive notice of the administration of the next examination with the notice of scores following such examination. Any applicant who passes the examination and meets the requirements of this section shall be licensed as a physician assistant with all rights defined thereby.~~

(e) The license must be renewed biennially. Each renewal must include:

1. A renewal fee not to exceed \$500 as set by the boards.

2. Acknowledgment A ~~sworn~~ statement of no felony convictions in the previous 2 years.

~~(e)~~(f) Notwithstanding subparagraph (a)2., the department may grant to a recent graduate of an approved program, as specified in subsection (6), who expects to take the first examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants available for registration after the applicant’s graduation, a temporary license. The temporary license shall expire 30 days after receipt of scores of the proficiency examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. Between meetings of the council, the department may grant a temporary license to practice based on the completion of all temporary licensure requirements. All such administratively issued licenses shall be reviewed and acted on at the next regular meeting of the council. The recent graduate may be licensed before ~~prior to~~ employment, but must comply with paragraph (d) ~~(e)~~. An applicant who has passed the proficiency examination may be granted permanent licensure. An applicant failing the proficiency examination is no longer temporarily licensed, but may reapply for a 1-year extension of temporary licensure. An applicant may not be granted more than two temporary licenses and may not be licensed as a physician assistant until he or she passes the examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. As prescribed by board rule, the council may require an applicant who does not pass the licensing examination after five or more attempts to complete additional remedial education or training. The council shall prescribe the additional requirements in a manner that permits the applicant to complete the requirements and be reexamined within 2 years after the date the applicant petitions the council to retake the examination a sixth or subsequent time.

Section 2. Paragraph (e) of subsection (4) of section 459.022, Florida Statutes, is amended, paragraph (g) is added to that subsection, and paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (7) of that section are amended, to read:

459.022 Physician assistants.—

(4) PERFORMANCE OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS.—

(e) A supervising ~~supervisory~~ physician may delegate to a fully licensed physician assistant the authority to prescribe or dispense any medication used in the supervising ~~supervisory~~ physician’s practice unless such medication is listed on the formulary created pursuant to s. 458.347. A fully licensed physician assistant may only prescribe or dispense such medication under the following circumstances:

1. A physician assistant must clearly identify to the patient that she or he is a physician assistant. Furthermore, the physician assistant must inform the patient that the patient has the right to see the physician before ~~prior to~~ any prescription is being prescribed or dispensed by the physician assistant.

2. The supervising supervisory physician must notify the department of her or his intent to delegate, on a department-approved form, before delegating such authority and notify the department of any change in prescriptive privileges of the physician assistant. Authority to dispense may be delegated only by a supervising supervisory physician who is registered as a dispensing practitioner in compliance with s. 465.0276.

3. The physician assistant must acknowledge with file with the department ~~a signed affidavit~~ that she or he has completed a minimum of 10 continuing medical education hours in the specialty practice in which the physician assistant has prescriptive privileges with each licensure renewal application.

4. The department may issue a prescriber number to the physician assistant granting authority for the prescribing of medicinal drugs authorized within this paragraph upon completion of the foregoing requirements. The physician assistant shall not be required to independently register pursuant to s. 465.0276.

5. The prescription may must be written in paper or electronic a form but must comply that complies with ss. 456.0392(1) and 456.42(1) and chapter 499 and must contain, in addition to the supervising supervisory physician's name, address, and telephone number, the physician assistant's prescriber number. Unless it is a drug or drug sample dispensed by the physician assistant, the prescription must be filled in a pharmacy permitted under chapter 465, and must be dispensed in that pharmacy by a pharmacist licensed under chapter 465. The appearance of the prescriber number creates a presumption that the physician assistant is authorized to prescribe the medicinal drug and the prescription is valid.

6. The physician assistant must note the prescription or dispensing of medication in the appropriate medical record.

(g) A licensed physician assistant may perform services delegated by the supervising physician in the physician assistant's practice in accordance with his or her education and training unless expressly prohibited under this chapter, chapter 458, or rules adopted under this chapter or chapter 458.

(7) PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE.—

(a) Any person desiring to be licensed as a physician assistant must apply to the department. The department shall issue a license to any person certified by the council as having met the following requirements:

1. Is at least 18 years of age.

2. Has satisfactorily passed a proficiency examination by an acceptable score established by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants. If an applicant does not hold a current certificate issued by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and has not actively practiced as a physician assistant within the immediately preceding

4 years, the applicant must retake and successfully complete the entry-level examination of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants to be eligible for licensure.

3. Has completed the application form and remitted an application fee not to exceed \$300 as set by the boards. An application for licensure made by a physician assistant must include:

a. A certificate of completion of a physician assistant training program specified in subsection (6).

b. Acknowledgment ~~A sworn statement~~ of any prior felony convictions.

c. Acknowledgment ~~A sworn statement~~ of any previous revocation or denial of licensure or certification in any state.

d. ~~Two letters of recommendation.~~

e. A copy of course transcripts and a copy of the course description from a physician assistant training program describing course content in pharmacotherapy, if the applicant wishes to apply for prescribing authority. These documents must meet the evidence requirements for prescribing authority.

(b) The licensure must be renewed biennially. Each renewal must include:

1. A renewal fee not to exceed \$500 as set by the boards.

2. Acknowledgment ~~A sworn statement~~ of no felony convictions in the previous 2 years.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

Approved by the Governor March 25, 2016.

Filed in Office Secretary of State March 25, 2016.