



Physician Assistants

Background

Recently, College Bylaws were drafted to introduce a framework for licensing and regulation of physician assistants (PA) to respond to the urgent need to resource emergency departments in the province. The below FAQs were developed to address common questions raised during the consultation of the bylaw amendments. This document only addresses questions related to the College Bylaws.

Frequently asked questions

Where will PAs be permitted to practise?

At this time, PAs will only be permitted to practise in emergency departments within health authorities. We anticipate that as more PAs become eligible for registration in BC that PAs may be permitted to work in other clinical settings similar to other provinces.

Do PAs have a scope of practice?

Because PAs are not currently a designated health profession in BC under the *Health Professions Act* they are recognized as “certified non-registrants” of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. This means that PAs do not have a scope of practice or title protection and all work is to be assigned, supervised, or delegated by the supervising physician. Under the existing legislation, all delegation of restricted activities from a physician must be set out in the Bylaws. Delegation permits the physician assistant to perform a restricted activity.

Is a PA permitted to obtain informed consent for a procedure?

No. The supervising physician must obtain the patient's informed consent for the restricted activity to be performed, unless it is not possible due to an emergency.

Can PAs complete forms under the *Mental Health Act*, particularly Form 4s?

No. Only physicians licensed for independent practice or nurse practitioners can sign Form 4s. It should be noted that all forms physicians may be asked to complete, such as medical certificates of death, birth certificates and stillbirth certificates, can only be completed by physicians who are licensed for independent practice.

Can PAs be under the supervision of a

Who determines that a physician assistant is competent to perform restricted activities?
As part of the onboarding process, the supervising physician(s) named in a contracting ph