

Expansion of Practice Autonomy of Physician Assistants

Summary

Article By:

Brian S. Fleetham

Rose Willis

As part of a flurry of activity at the end of 2016, **Public Act 379** was enacted by the *Michigan* legislature and signed by Governor Snyder. That Act amends various provisions of the Michigan Public Health Code (the “Code”) regarding the professional relationship of physician assistants (“PAs”) with physicians and podiatrists and regarding the professional independence of PAs. The Act’s provisions take effect on March 22, 2017. Physician practices and other entities that employ PAs will need to address these changes by that date.

Previously, Michigan law required PAs to work under the supervision and delegation of a physician or a podiatrist. The new Act deletes those terms from the Code. The intent behind these changes is to create a legal structure that fosters a more collaborative approach to patient care between PAs and physicians and that authorizes greater independence and autonomy for PAs treating patients within their general scope of practice.

Other changes include PAs as independent prescribers, PAs entering into a mandatory practice agreement, physician to PA ratio and licensing board authority, liability and professional liability insurance, billing and reimbursement, as well as independent rounding and house calls.

Physician group practices and other entities that employ PAs should begin addressing these matters soon to allow enough time to implement these new requirements before March 22, 2017.

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National Law Review, Volume VII, Number 24

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/expansion-practice-autonomy-physician-assistants-summary>