

2014 -- S 2528

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LC004867  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- GLOBAL SIGNATURE LAW

Introduced By: Senator Joshua Miller

Date Introduced: February 27, 2014

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 5-34-42 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-34 entitled "Nurses" is  
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **5-34-42. Global signature authority of certified registered nurse practitioners. --**  
4 Whenever any provision of the general or public law, or regulation requires a signature, [a](#)  
5 certification [of any kind](#), stamp, verification, affidavit or endorsement by a physician, [however](#)  
6 [defined](#), it shall be deemed to include a signature, certification, stamp, verification, affidavit or  
7 endorsement by a certified registered nurse practitioner; provided, however, that nothing in this  
8 section shall be construed to expand the scope of practice of nurse practitioners. [No statute,](#)  
9 [whether enacted prior to or after enactment of this act, shall be deemed to supersede the authority](#)  
10 [provided by this section unless the statute cites this section of the general laws to that effect.](#)

11 SECTION 2. Section 5-54-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-54 entitled "Physician  
12 Assistants" is hereby amended to read as follows:

13 **5-54-8. Permitted health care practices by physician assistants. --** (a) Physician  
14 assistants shall practice with physician supervision and shall be considered the agents of their  
15 supervising physicians in the performance of all practice-related activities. Whenever any  
16 provision of general or public law, or regulation, requires a signature, [a](#) certification [of any kind](#),  
17 stamp, verification, affidavit or endorsement by a physician, [however defined](#), it shall be deemed  
18 to include a signature, certification, stamp, verification, affidavit or endorsement by a physician  
19 assistant; provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be construed to expand the scope of

1 practice of physician assistants. No statute, whether enacted prior to or after enactment of this act,  
2 shall be deemed to supersede the authority provided by this section unless the statute cites this  
3 section of the general laws to that effect.

4 (b) Physician assistants may perform those duties and responsibilities consistent with the  
5 limitations of this section, including prescribing of drugs and medical devices, which are  
6 delegated by their supervising physician(s). Physician assistants may request, receive, sign for  
7 and distribute professional samples of drugs and medical devices to patients only within the  
8 limitations of this section. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, a physician assistant may  
9 perform health care services when those services are rendered under the supervision of a licensed  
10 physician.

11 ~~(b)~~(c) Physician assistants, depending upon their level of professional training and  
12 experience, as determined by a supervising physician, may perform health care services  
13 consistent with their expertise and that of the supervising physician, who is a licensed physician  
14 in solo practice, in group practice, or in health care facilities.

15 ~~(e)~~(d) Physician assistants may write prescriptions and medical orders to the extent  
16 provided in this paragraph. When employed by or extended medical staff privileges by a licensed  
17 hospital or other licensed health care facility a physician assistant may write medical orders for  
18 inpatients as delineated by the medical staff bylaws of the facility as well as its credentialing  
19 process and applicable governing authority. Physician assistants employed directly by physicians,  
20 health maintenance organizations or other health care delivery organizations may prescribe  
21 legend medications including schedule II, III, IV and V medications under chapter 28 of title 21  
22 of the Rhode Island Uniform Controlled Substances Act, medical therapies, medical devices and  
23 medical diagnostics according to guidelines established by the employing physician, health  
24 maintenance organization or other health care delivery organization.

25 ~~(d)~~(e) When supervised by a physician licensed under chapter 29 of this title, the service  
26 rendered by the physician assistant shall be limited to the foot. The "foot" is defined as the pedal  
27 extremity of the human body and its articulations, and includes the tendons and muscles of the  
28 lower leg only as they are involved in conditions of the foot.

29 ~~(e)~~(f) Hospitals and other licensed health care facilities have discretion to grant  
30 privileges to a physician assistant and to define the scope of privileges or services which a  
31 physician assistant may deliver in a facility. In no event shall those privileges, if granted, exceed  
32 the privileges granted to the supervising physician.

33 SECTION 3. Section 21-28.6-13 of the General Laws in Chapter 21-28.6 entitled "The  
34 Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act" is hereby amended to read as

1 follows:

2           **21-28.6-13. Construction.** -- This chapter shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate  
3 the purposes thereof. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to limit the authority of  
4 physicians to delegate any activities, including written certifications, to physician assistants as  
5 provided for in § 5-54-8 or to certified registered nurse practitioners under the provisions of § 5-  
6 34-42.

7           SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- GLOBAL SIGNATURE LAW

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- 1           This act would conform the definitions of the powers and duties of certified registered
- 2 nurse practitioners and physician assistants to the definitions employed by the global signature
- 3 law.
- 4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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