

PHYSICIAN EXTENDER II

This is intermediate level professional work in augmenting the primary health care physician in making medical diagnoses and dispensing medical treatment. An employee in this role has received specialized training to function as an assistant to or extension of a physician. Before performing in this role, the physician assistant, surgeon's assistant, or nurse practitioner must be approved to practice medical acts by the appropriate State Board. Approval to practice medical acts includes giving a medical diagnosis, ordering therapy, and prescribing medications outlined in the approved formulary. An employee at this level may be trained in one specialized area(s) such as family planning, but will more likely have a broader medical background and will function in a variety of settings. As with the Physician Extender I, employees obtain a thorough patient history and physical examination, perform appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, record and present this information to the physician, develop and maintain health care and therapeutic plans, and counsel patients. Employees may function as primary/secondary assistants to the surgeon in routine, non-complex surgical operations as a regular function of the position. These employees are practicing with a physician who is ultimately responsible for the employees' medical practice; supervision from the physician includes a set of mutually agreed to patient care protocols and medical guidelines with the physician immediately available by telephone or physically, if needed, for consultation. The employee always functions under the supervision of a primary or secondary physician. In addition, the employee may also function under the direction of non-medical personnel, i.e., nursing or administration while performing non-medical acts. This work has been identified in State hospitals, university infirmaries, local government public health and mental health programs, correctional units, and in other agency clinic settings.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Patients present with a wider variety of conditions requiring that the employee have a broader and in-depth knowledge of the area of assignment; work may be performed in a specialized area(s), such as family planning or geriatrics, or in a generalized area that requires the employee to function in a wide variety of settings and work assignments. Employees at this level frequently serve as consultants to the medical staff, participate as in-service education leaders, and may serve as a student preceptor. Work may include participating in the evaluation, development, and implementation of agency policies, procedures, goals, and objectives, and other administration functions.

Intricacy - A broader variety of patient conditions present with greater complications. Employees have the ability and delegated authority from the supervising physician to make more independent and varied decisions affecting the patient's treatment plan and total care; the work environment frequently dictates the need for this role. Employees must interpret the accepted patient care protocols and medical guidelines to cover this variety and determine the appropriate course of action.

Subject Matter Complexity - The employee must have a complete understanding of the patient care protocols and medical guidelines used in the area of work, and a broader understanding of the health field.

Guidelines - The patient care protocols and medical guidelines outline work procedures, but are broader and allow the extender more independence in decision-making. Guidelines include the medical protocol approved by the physician, agency policies and procedures, reference manuals, and program guidelines and standards.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Daily work is self-planned and performed with considerable independence. Short-range plans and changes can usually be implemented; significant or long-range plans and changes are coordinated with the supervising physician and other members of the health care team (i.e., pharmacist, physical therapist, nutritionist, etc.).

Nature of Review - All written histories, medical, and therapeutic treatment plans and drug prescriptions must be reviewed and signed by the supervising physician within a 72-hour period of the documentation (time frames for review vary from agency to agency). Work is always reviewed upon completion by the supervising physician, and occasionally during the work process. This extender receives less physician supervision in dealing with unusual conditions and complex problems; however, these conditions may need to be reported. Conditions outside the approved area of expertise are referred to a physician, as outlined in the patient care protocols and medical guidelines.

Scope of Decisions - Work has a direct affect on the patient population served.

Consequence of Decisions - The consequence of this employee's decisions has significant impact on the patient's safety and well being.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work requires contacts with specific patient population and families who may be unfamiliar with the work function, or with special groups as mental patients or prisoners; may also have contact with physicians, nurses, and other medical personnel.

Nature and Purpose - Contacts frequently require persuading and influencing patients to pursue medical treatment or another course of action.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Hazards - Periodically exposed to patients who may be difficult to work with and a mildly disagreeable work environment.

Work Conditions - Some exposure to patients who may be difficult to work with and a mildly disagreeable work environment.

V. JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Thorough knowledge of techniques of interviewing, medical and relevant history taking, principles and practices of general medicine and disease states as they relate to the area of work; thorough knowledge of health appraisal tools, laboratory tests and findings, materia medica, and therapeutic procedures as relate to the area of work; thorough knowledge and ability to plan a regime of care based on assessment and findings; considerable knowledge of available resources and appropriate referral methods.

Skills in performing clinical functions.

Skill in assisting with routine surgical procedures.

Ability to examine patients and detect abnormalities; ability to record accurately and completely all information necessary to evaluate and plan care and to convey this to the physician; ability to communicate orally; ability to teach and counsel individuals, families and groups in areas of health maintenance, preventive medicine, and care of the sick; and the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff and to gain the confidence of patients and families and work effectively with them; some ability to plan and conduct inservice training programs.

Minimum Training and Experience - Graduation from a Physician Assistant program approved by the N.C. Board of Medical Examiners and "approved to practice medical acts" based on education and experience by the Board of Medical Examiners, and preferably one year of experience as an extender; or graduation from an accredited Surgeon's Assistant Program of at least 24 months duration and "approved to practice medical acts" based on education and experience by the Board of Medical Examiners; or licensed as a Registered Nurse by the Board of Nursing, graduation from a Nurse Practitioner program approved by the N. C. Joint Subcommittee of the Board of Nursing and Board of Medical Examiners, and "approved to practice medical acts" based on education and experience by the Joint Subcommittee, and preferably one year of experience as an extender; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Special Note - This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to identify essential functions per ADA. Examples of work are primarily essential functions of the majority of positions in this class, but may not be applicable to all positions.