

PHYSICIAN EXTENDER III

This is advanced 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 functions in a work environment that requires more independent judgements in planning and maintaining total medical care for a patient; the characteristics of the work environment provide a broader scope of duties and increased overall complexity, as in a surgical area where the employee will primarily serve as first or second assistant in complex, non-routine surgery in the OR or in an intensive care unit where one commonly performs procedures as endotracheal intubation and central venous catheter insertion. Or the employee may provide sophisticated medical care with less physician supervision and, in addition, supervise and coordinate the nursing and medical services of a work area.

As with the Physician Extender I and II, employees obtain a thorough patient history and physician 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. In a surgical area, employees have initial diagnostic, pre-operative, operative, and post-operative tasks; a majority of time is spent performing surgical activities in areas such as cardiac surgery, orthopaedic surgery, and burn reconstruction. These employees are practicing with a physician who is ultimately responsible for the employee's 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 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 - Work is performed in a work environment that requires the employee to work with a broad variety of patient conditions, consequently, a broad variety of duties and responsibilities. The employee typically has the first contact with the patient and will manage the total medical and/or therapeutic care plan for the patient; this could include cancer patients receiving chemotherapy and radiation therapy, management of peritoneal dialysis patients, or the complete management of an obstetrical case including the delivery. Work may include supervisory and administrative duties which broaden the variety and scope; such as: serve as consultant to the medical staff, precept students, supervise lower-level extenders, formulate policies and procedures, and serve on agency committees.

Intricacy - A broad variety of situations and problems present requiring considerable analysis in determining the appropriate plan of action. Employee may have to research other resources, including the supervising physician.

Subject Matter Complexity - The employee must have a broad and in-depth understanding of the medical states presenting, and of the patient care protocols and medical guidelines.

Guidelines - The patient care protocols and medical guidelines outline work procedures, but are more varied and broader to cover the patient conditions presenting. Guidelines include the medical protocol approved by the physician, agency policies and procedures, reference manuals, and program guidelines and standards.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Mature 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 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 major 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 moderate hazards which could result in injury/illness.

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; thorough knowledge, of available resources and appropriate referral methods; thorough knowledge of specialized and technical tests/procedures specific to the surgical area to which the employee is assigned; skill in performing clinical and/or surgical functions; ability to supervise and coordinate other nursing and medical staff, to evaluate the quality of services delivered, and to institute methods of improving or maintaining established standards

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of nursing and medical care: ability to plan, institute, and conduct in-service training programs; 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 family and work effectively with them.

Minimum Training and Experience - Licensed as a Physician Assistant by the North Carolina Medical Board or approved to practice as a Nurse Practitioner by the North Carolina Board of Nursing and the North Carolina Medical Board and two years of experience as a Physician 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.