ESSENTIAL INFORMATION
April 2015

Physician Scope of Practice Delegation Laws
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SUMMARY
This interactive map identifies where a physician’s supervision and direct delegation is required for one of these medical professionals to conduct medical acts. The medical acts that may be delegated are not an exhaustive list, but are instead the most common and important medical acts identifiable in the law across all jurisdictions.

ABOUT PHYSICIAN SCOPE OF PRACTICE DELEGATION LAWS & THE DATA
Physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals work together to deliver health care in the United States. Across the nation, laws govern the level of independence nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and physician assistants have to deliver care to patients. In some states, all of these medical professionals may practice independently, while in others, nurses must be supervised, or they must have an agreement granting permission to practice under a physician.

Within these agreements, physicians may delegate some or all of their scope of practice to these other medical professionals. This dataset identifies variations in state laws that address physicians’ abilities to delegate medical activities for nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and physician assistants.

States may allow or disallow independent practice for nurse practitioners or physician assistants when conducting medical activities. In states that disallow independent practice, physicians must have a formalized agreement before they can delegate certain medical acts or their scope of practice. Registered nurses typically need supervision or a delegation agreement in place to have any authority to carry out medical acts.

The laws available here were updated through April 30, 2015.

Some findings from the dataset include:
- In 30 jurisdictions, physicians can delegate medical activities to nurse practitioners.
- In 29 jurisdictions, the supervising physician must conduct chart reviews for medical activities delegated to physician assistants.
- In 27 jurisdictions, a physician may delegate the administration of medication to a physician assistant.

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NAVIGATING THE DATA

There are two ways to navigate the data by clicking the Filter tab or the Explore tab — for each option, the data can be visualized in a map and table format or in jurisdiction profiles.

Filter
The dataset homepage will default to the Filter tab. Here, users may answer a series of questions to learn more about the characteristics of the laws. Answering more than one question will show all the jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria. Criteria selected will be listed above the questions, and can be removed by clicking the white X or by clicking “Reset” above the questions.

Explore
Users can access Explore by clicking the Explore tab in the bar above the questions. Using Explore, users will see the answers to one question across all jurisdictions.

The primary questions in this dataset are:

1. What medical activities are explicitly included in this jurisdiction’s definition of medicine?
2. Does the law allow a physician to delegate any medical activities to a nurse practitioner?
3. Does the law allow a physician to delegate any medical activities to a registered nurse?
4. Does the law allow a physician to delegate any medical activities to a physician assistant?

DISPLAYING THE RESULTS

There are two display modes once criteria have been selected by using either the Filter or Explore tab — Map display mode and Profiles display mode.

Map Display
LawAtlas.org dataset homepages default to the map display mode. When querying the data using the Filter tab, all jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display in one tone of yellow. Those jurisdictions that do not meet the criteria selected will be colored gray. When querying the data using the Explore tab, the map will illuminate with colors from yellow to red that are associated with the various answer choices (the color-coding is defined by the key to the left of the map).

Below the map, a table will appear. Using the Filter or Explore tab to navigate the questions will change the display:

- Using the Filter tab, you can select an unlimited number of criteria and the applicable jurisdictions that meet the combined criteria will be displayed in the table below.
- Using the Explore tab, you can isolate a single criterion and the applicable jurisdictions will appear in the table below.

Profiles Display
The Profiles display presents the results of the criteria selected in a text-based format for each applicable jurisdiction. Using the Filter tab, jurisdictions that meet the criteria selected will display. Using the Explore tab, jurisdictions that meet the criterion selected will display. If no criteria are selected, the full profiles for each state will appear under both Filter and Explore.
Profile Legend

Within each Profile box, above the questions and answers, there are additional options and information useful in exploring the law:

- **Toggle Legal Text** – Selecting this option will show all the legal text used to answer questions for this jurisdiction.

- **Toggle Full Place Profile** – Selecting this option will show all questions and answers for this jurisdiction, regardless of what was selected using the Filter or Explore tabs.

- **Toggle Size** – Selecting this option will make the profile larger, but will not change the information displayed.

**Legal Text History** – This interactive timeline displays when changes in the law have occurred within a jurisdiction. Using the arrows to the left or right, users may explore how the law has changed over time as new amendments to the law have been enacted. The timeline will change from gray to a shade of yellow when the jurisdiction passed its first relevant law. Each change in the law after that is marked by a break in the timeline.

**Map and Profile Legend**

There are a few symbols to be aware of in both Map and Profiles display modes:

- **Section Symbol** – Clicking this symbol will open a window that displays excerpts from the law that correspond to the question and answer.

- **Caution Note** – Clicking on this symbol will open a small window that displays text that describes important caveats about the question and answer.

**DATASET RESOURCES**

Each dataset homepage includes the following resources available for download:

- **Data**: The Data file exports in CSV. format and may contain two tabs. The “Statistical Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset, displayed as values defined in the accompanying Codebook. The “Summary Data” tab contains the legal variables coded in the dataset in text form, as well as the accompanying citations and any caution notes that may be included. Note: if there is only one tab available for download it will be the “Statistical Data” as described above.
- Codebook: The Codebook defines all of the coded variables in the dataset. The Codebook lists the question, question type, variable name, variable value and variable label. The Codebook should be used in conjunction with the Statistical Data extract.

- Research Protocol: The Research Protocol is a comprehensive document that outlines the entire methodology of the project, including the scope, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data collection methods, definitions, coding scheme decisions, as well as the quality control process.

- Summary Report: The Summary Report provides a snapshot of important findings from the dataset.

This collection of laws does not provide legal advice nor does it address enforcement of laws, administrative policies, case law, or any other sources of law. Should you have a specific question about these laws in your state, please contact an attorney in your jurisdiction.