

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2021 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 431 — Practice of Physician Assistants

by Health and Human Services Committee; Professions and Public Health Subcommittee; Rep. Rommel and others (CS/CS/SB 894 by Appropriations Committee; Health Policy Committee; and Senator Diaz)

The bill expands the scope of practice of physician assistants (PA) by allowing them to:

- Prescribe psychiatric mental health controlled substances to minors under certain circumstances;
- Procure certain medical equipment and devices;
- Supervise medical assistants; and
- Sign and certify documents that currently require a physician's signatures including, but not limited to, Baker Act commitments, do-not-resuscitate orders, school physicals, and death certificates. The bill specifies that a PA may not sign for medical marijuana certifications under s. 381.986, F.S., or workers compensation medical examinations required to determine maximum medical improvement under s. 440.02, F.S., and an impairment rating under s. 440.15, F.S.

Current law requires that an applicant for a PA license must provide a certificate of completion of a board approved PA program. The bill establishes new educational requirements for PA licensure, based on an applicant's year of graduation from an approved PA program, as follows:

- For an applicant who has graduated after December 31, 2020, he or she must have received a master's degree in accordance with the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant;
- For an applicant who graduated on or before December 31, 2020, he or she must have received a bachelor's or master's degree from an approved program;
- For an applicant who graduated before July 1, 1994, has graduated from an approved program of instruction in primary health care or surgery; and
- For an applicant who graduated before July 1, 1983, has received a certification as a PA from boards.

The bill further authorizes the board to grant a license to an applicant who does not meet the above specified educational requirements, but who has passed the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants before 1986.

The bill also authorizes physician assistants to directly bill for and receive payments from public and private insurance companies for the services they deliver.

Current law limits the number of physician assistants a physician can supervise to four. The bill expands the number of PAs that a physician can supervise to 10.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2021.

Vote: Senate 38-2; House 111-1