

Health Employment Directive No. 02/24

Effective Date:
13/05/2024

Supersedes:
n/a

Physician Assistants

1. Compliance

Compliance with this health employment directive (HED) is mandatory.

2. Purpose

To require Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) engaging physician assistant/s to adhere to the Physician Assistant Clinical Governance Guideline (Guideline) and undertake the required provisions including the Physician Assistant Practice Plan (Practice Plan), and other related documents and tools identified in the Guideline.

3. Legislative Provision

Section 51A of the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* (the Act).

4. Application

This HED applies to physician assistants and their supervising medical practitioners employed under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*.

5. Related documents

- [Physician Assistant Clinical Governance Guideline](#)
- [Physician Assistant Practice Plan](#)
- [Factsheet 1 – Clinical Governance Guideline Overview](#)
- [Factsheet 2 – Employment Arrangements](#)
- [Factsheet 3 – Indemnity](#)
- [Medicines Prescribing Competency Checklist](#)
- [Physician Assistant Application for Endorsement](#)
- [Physician Assistant Clinical Practice Report](#)
- [Physician Assistant Statement of Core Duties](#)
- [Medicines and Poisons \(Medicines\) Regulation 2021](#)
- [Radiation Safety Regulation 2021](#)
- [Queensland Health Organisational Change Management Guidelines](#) (restricted access)
- [Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011](#)



Directive:**6. Clinical Governance**

Physician assistants employed in HHSs must practice according to the provisions outlined in the Guideline. The Guideline provides a governance framework and standardised processes to support physician assistants and supervisors in the provision of safe and quality care in Queensland's HHSs.

Physician assistants must have an individual scope of practice defined in the Practice Plan that is endorsed by the HHS medical credentialing committee and approved by the HHS delegate.

The Practice Plan will be used in accordance with the Guideline and provides a framework for clinical practice and supervision of the physician assistant. The Practice Plan template is an approved form and complies with the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, the *Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021*, and the *Radiation Safety Regulation 2021*.

7. Employment Arrangements

Physician assistants are classified under the Professional Officers Stream of the *Hospital and Health Service General Employees' (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015* and in accordance with further terms and conditions under the relevant *Queensland Public Health Sector Certified Agreement*.

Indemnity for both physician assistants and supervising medical practitioners when employed by HHSs will have statutory exemption from liability under the *Public Sector Act 2022 (Qld)*.

Physician assistants will undergo a pre-employment screening in accordance with Queensland Health's Employment Screen HR Policy B40 and have an assessment of skills and abilities prior to establishing and determining delegated practice scope.

A physician assistant statement of core duties is available as a guide.

It is a requirement that any HHS seeking to introduce or expand the use of physician assistants must consult with relevant unions, demonstrate clear benefits of an organisational change, comply with industrial obligations contained in the relevant certified agreements, and with the agreed change management processes outlined in the Queensland Health Organisation Change Management Guidelines.

All HHSs seeking an organisational change to introduce physician assistant role/s must register with Workforce Strategy Branch at least seven (7) business days prior to formal consultation. Please send relevant draft Business Case for Significant Change documentation to PA@health.qld.gov.au.

8. Definitions

Physician assistant	A physician assistant is a clinician working as a member of a multidisciplinary team under the delegation and supervision of a medical practitioner. The role is generalist in nature, with a focus on primary, emergency, and preventative care. However, under delegated practice a physician assistant may specialise, depending on experience and the scope of clinical practice of the supervising medical practitioner.
Physician assistant governance framework (Framework)	A clinical governance framework provides the recommended pre-practice and practice requirements for the physician assistant role. A range of governance documents support the Framework, including the Guideline, Practice Plan, factsheets, tools and templates provided under section 5. Related Documents of the Guideline.

Physician assistant clinical governance guideline (Guideline)	A governance guideline document outlines fundamental best practise and minimum standards and processes for all clinically related aspects for the role of physician assistant ensuring a systematic approach to managing, maintaining and improving the quality of patient care within the public health system.
Physician assistant practice plan (Practice Plan)	A mandated form that provides a framework for clinical practice and supervision of the physician assistant role. The Practice Plan defines the individual scope of practice specific to the position and is endorsed by the medical credentialing committee.

9. History

HED No. 02/24 13/05/2024	Issued under section 51A of the <i>Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011</i> as a condition of employment for health service employees.
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10. Approval and implementation

Directive custodian

Chief Human Resources Officer

Approval by Chief Executive

[signed]

Michael Walsh
Director-General

Approval date: 13/05/2024