HOUSE BILL NO. 1120

AN ACT TO ALLOW PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN
DISASTER AND EMERGENCY CARE WITHOUT THE SUPERVISION OF A
PHYSICIAN; TO AMEND SECTIONS 73-26-3 AND 73-26-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE
OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. In the event of a national emergency duly
declared by federal officials or in the event of a natural
disaster or state emergency duly declared by the Governor, a
physician assistant licensed in this state or licensed or
authorized to practice in any other United States' jurisdiction or
who is credentialed as a physician assistant by a federal employer
who is responding to a need for medical care created by an
emergency or a state or local disaster (not to be defined as an
emergency situation which occurs in the place of one's employment)
may provide emergency medical treatment without the immediate
physician supervision or direction to patients within the affected
areas of the state, provided that treatment is within the scope of
the assistant's education, training and approved job description.
The physician assistant in such circumstances shall make
reasonable efforts to inform his supervising physician of the
location and type of emergency medical services being provided and
shall act in conformance with the direction of local medical
supervisors. Any physician who supervises a physician assistant
providing medical care in response to such an emergency or state
or local disaster shall not be required to meet the requirements
set forth in Section 73-26-5. The authority granted under this
section shall extend only for the duration of the declared
national emergency or state emergency or natural disaster.
SECTION 2. Section 73-26-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

73-26-3. (1) The State Board of Medical Licensure shall license and regulate the practice of physician assistants in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(2) All physician assistants who are employed as physician assistants by a Department of Veterans Affairs health care facility, a branch of the United States military or the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and who are practicing as physician assistants in a federal facility in Mississippi on July 1, 2000, and those physician assistants who trained in a Mississippi physician assistant program and have been continuously practicing as a physician assistant in Mississippi since 1976, shall be eligible for licensure if they submit an application for licensure to the board by December 31, 2000. Physician assistants licensed under this subsection will be eligible for license renewal so long as they meet standard renewal requirements.

(3) Before December 31, 2004, applicants for physician assistant licensure, except those licensed under subsection (2) of this section, must be graduates of physician assistant educational programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs or its predecessor or successor agency, have passed the certification examination administered by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), have current NCCPA certification, and possess a minimum of a baccalaureate degree. Physician assistants meeting these licensure requirements will be eligible for license renewal so long as they meet standard renewal requirements.

(4) On or after December 31, 2004, applicants for physician assistant licensure must meet all of the requirements in subsection (3) of this section and, in addition, must have obtained a minimum of a master's degree in a health-related or science field.
(5) Applicants for licensure who meet all licensure requirements except for the master's degree may be granted a temporary license by the board so long as they can show proof of enrollment in a master's program that will, when completed, meet the master's degree requirement. The temporary license will be valid for no longer than one (1) year, and may not be renewed. This subsection shall take effect and be in force from and after March 9, 2006. This subsection shall stand repealed on July 1, 2010.

(6) For new graduate physician assistants and all physician assistants receiving initial licenses in the state, except those licensed under subsection (2) of this section, and except as provided in Section 1 of this act, supervision shall require the on-site presence of a supervising physician for one hundred twenty (120) days.

SECTION 3. Section 73-26-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

73-26-5. (1) Except as provided in Section 1 of this act, the board shall promulgate and publish reasonable rules and regulations necessary to enable it to discharge its functions and to enforce the provisions of law regulating the practice of physician assistants. Those rules shall include, but are not limited to: qualifications for licensure for physician assistants; scope of practice of physician assistants; supervision of physician assistants; identification of physician assistants; grounds for disciplinary actions and discipline of physician assistants; and setting and charging reasonable fees for licensure and license renewals for physician assistants. However, nothing in this chapter or in rules adopted by the board shall authorize physician assistants to administer or monitor general inhaled anesthesia, epidural anesthesia, spinal anesthesia or monitored anesthesia as utilized in surgical procedures.
(2) If the board appoints a task force or committee to address physician assistant regulation, at least one (1) member of the task force shall be a nurse practitioner who is a member of the Mississippi Board of Nursing or a nurse practitioner appointee selected by the board from a list of three (3) recommendations submitted by the Mississippi Nurses Association, and at least one (1) member shall be a physician assistant selected by the board from a list of three (3) recommendations submitted by the Mississippi Academy of Physician Assistants.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2007.