

**CERTIFICATION BOARD  
FOR  
RADIOLOGY PRACTITIONER ASSISTANTS**

**DOCUMENTS ON THE**

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**STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

**AND**

**STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**FOR THE**

**RADIOLOGY PRACTITIONER ASSISTANT**

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# **STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR RADIOLOGY PRACTITIONER ASSISTANTS**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to define the Scope of Practice for Radiology Practitioner Assistants (RPA), to establish a desired and achievable level of performance and to delineate their role as a mid-level practitioner in medical imaging on the health care team, providing quality health care services in medical imaging and acting in the best interests of the patient. The Standards of Practice assist the RPA to:

- preserve the basic rights of the patient;
- provide safe, consistent patient care;
- coordinate radiology health care services;
- promote and maintain appropriate application of knowledge and skills in the performance and evaluation of imaging procedures;
- communicate and educate the patient and the public in understanding medical imaging procedures;
- adhere to the professional code of ethics;
- acknowledge the need for expedient radiologist consultation/supervision consistent with the application of knowledge and skills; and
- assume professional responsibility for the welfare and dignity of all patients under their care.

## **DEFINITION OF THE PROFESSION**

A Radiology Practitioner Assistant (RPA) is a health professional certified and registered as a radiographer and is credentialed to provide primary radiology health care with physician supervision. Radiology Practitioner Assistants are qualified by graduation from an educational program recognized by the Board of Directors of the Certification Board for Radiology Practitioner Assistants (CBRPA). Within the physician/RPA relationship and under the guidance, supervision and discretion of a licensed physician, Radiology Practitioner Assistants exercise autonomy in decision making in the role of a primary care-giver with regard to patient assessment, patient management and in providing a broad range of medical imaging and interventional services. The clinical role of the Radiology Practitioner Assistant includes primary and speciality care in radiology practice settings in rural and urban areas and is defined by the supervising physician.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

As a mid-level health professional, the Radiology Practitioner Assistant is an advanced level of the Radiologic Technology profession and will adhere to the accepted and established professional Code of Ethics, the principles set forth in the established Rules of Ethics, and the CBRPA addendum to the professional Code of Ethics.

## STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The Radiology Practitioner Assistant is a health professional qualified by completion of an academic program recognized by the CBRPA and by demonstrating clinical competence as determined by a supervising physician to provide medical imaging procedures, to perform an initial evaluation of medical images and to provide a internal technical report to the physician to assist in patient care and management. CBRPA strongly believes that the supervision of RPAs should be provided by licensed physicians who are board-certified (ABR) radiologists or have comparable qualifications.

### STANDARD ONE

#### PATIENT INFORMATION, ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

**Standard #1:** The medical history and current physiological and psychological health status of the patient is essential in providing diagnostic information. Therefore, pertinent data regarding the patient's medical history, including familial history as it relates to the diagnostic process, must be collected and documented, when possible, to assess its relevance to the imaging procedure and to patient management.

**Criteria:**

- 1.1 Confirms patient identification and verifies the requested procedure correlates with the patient's clinical history and current presentation. In the event that the requested procedure does not correlate, either the interpreting physician or the referring physician will be notified.
- 1.2 Uses objective and subjective assessment techniques to gather relevant information from the patient, guardian or the patient's representative, the patient's medical records or members of the medical staff regarding the patient's health status and clinical history.
- 1.3 Determines if any contra-indications exist for the prescribed procedure, such as, medications, insufficient preparation, ability to tolerate the procedure or the patient's unwillingness to proceed with the procedure.
- 1.4 Evaluates the data to determine the medical imaging procedure that will best demonstrate the suspected pathological condition while optimizing patient safety, comfort, tolerance and cost effectiveness.
- 1.5 Determines the pregnancy status of patients of child bearing age.
- 1.6 Conducts a physical examination of the patient, when necessary, to obtain additional information on the patient's condition.

## STANDARD TWO

### PATIENT EDUCATION AND SECURING INFORMED CONSENT

**STANDARD #2:** Establishment of a positive relationship with the patient, the patient's family, guardian or the patient's representative through effective communication and education is necessary to obtain patient cooperation and an understanding of expectations.

**Criteria:**

- 2.1 Provides explanations of the procedure or instructions for the procedure that can be easily understood by the patient, the patient's family, guardian or the patient's representative.
- 2.2 Responds to the patient's questions and concerns regarding the procedure.
- 2.3 Verifies that the patient has consented to the procedure and clearly understands the risks, benefits, alternatives and follow-up care. When appropriate, the Radiology Practitioner Assistant confirms that written consent has been obtained.
- 2.4 Explains the necessity of the administration of contrast media and possible side effects.
- 2.5 Refers questions about the diagnosis, treatment or prognosis concerning the patient's condition to the patient's physician or supervising physician
- 2.6 Provides quality patient care through education of the patient, preparation of the patient, and demonstrates a sensitivity to the patients condition and needs, while taking into consideration the patient's ethnicity and cultural background.

## STANDARD THREE

### ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF THE APPROPRIATE CLINICAL PATHWAY

**STANDARD #3:** The most appropriate clinical pathway<sup>1</sup> seeks to optimize patient safety and comfort based on the clinical presentation, patient assessment and analysis of data in the selection of the imaging modality to achieve the optimum diagnostic objective of the examination and in consideration of cost effectiveness.

**Criteria:**

- 3.1 Analyzes the patient assessment data, medical history and other relevant information for consultation with the supervising physician in the determination of the clinical pathway, taking into consideration appropriate age and gender considerations.
- 3.2 Uses independent professional judgement to adapt or modify the examination to secure optimal examination results, either under the personal<sup>2</sup> or direct<sup>3</sup> supervision of the supervising physician, as defined by facility protocol.
- 3.3 Consults with appropriate medical staff, when necessary, to optimize the examination results and determines the need for additional qualified medical personnel to assist with the examination.
- 3.4 Determines the need for accessory equipment which may extend or modify the function of the medical imaging equipment to provide ancillary or complimentary diagnostic information.
- 3.5 Consults with the interpreting physician, when appropriate, to determine if contrast media will enhance the diagnostic value of the medical images and provide additional information.
- 3.6 Uses established guidelines and procedure for intravenous line insertion and/or contrast agent intravenous injection when its use is warranted.
- 3.7 Assesses and monitors the patient's physical and mental status following injection of contrast agents and can provide life support in emergency situations.

<sup>1</sup>**Clinical Pathway:** The selection of the medical imaging modality and procedure to best demonstrate the pathological condition based upon the condition and history of the patient, the objectives of the examination and diagnostic criteria.

<sup>2</sup>**Personal Supervision:** The procedure being conducted is directly supervised by a licensed physician..

<sup>3</sup>**Direct Supervision:** The independent performance of procedures with the availability of a licensed physician in the vicinity or through contact by telecommunications or thorough review of the completed examination by a licensed physician.

## STANDARD FOUR

### IMPLEMENTATION OF IMAGING EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

**Standard #4:** Quality patient care is provided through the safe and accurate implementation of the appropriate imaging examination procedure.

**Criteria:**

- 4.1 Assures the readiness of the equipment and needed accessory equipment for the imaging, interventional or diagnostic invasive procedure.
- 4.2 Follows the established protocol for the imaging procedure/examination being conducted, but may modify the protocol according to the patient's disease process, tolerance or condition.
- 4.3 Administers contrast media and/or other medications when ordered by the supervising physician, when appropriate, and closely monitors the patient for any adverse reaction.
- 4.4 Provides instruction to the patient throughout the procedure in order to elicit patient cooperation.
- 4.5 Documents any modification of the procedure protocol.
- 4.6 Demonstrates efficiency in the performance of fluoroscopic procedures, with minimum radiation exposure to the patient.
- 4.7 Assesses and monitors the patient's physical and mental status during the procedure.
- 4.8 Administers first aid, or provides life support in emergency situations, as outlined in the health care facility policies.
- 4.9 Recognizes imaging characteristics of normal vs abnormal tissues, structures or blood flow and adjusts the equipment parameters to optimize the medical image.
- 4.10 Analyzes medical image findings throughout the procedure to provide a comprehensive examination and to obtain sufficient data in order for the supervising physician to provide appropriate patient management and render a final diagnosis.

## STANDARD FIVE

### MEDICAL IMAGE EVALUATION

**Standard #5:** Analysis of the imaging procedure results in context with the procedure and the patient's medical and clinical history is important to determine if the goals of the procedure have been met or if additional imaging procedures are needed.

**Criteria:**

- 5.1 Establishes that the procedure, as performed, complies with applicable protocol, documents if modifications were made in the protocol and determines if additional images will enhance the diagnostic value of the procedure.
- 5.2 Identifies normal *vs* abnormal findings and correlates the findings to the patient's clinical presentation and symptoms.
- 5.3 Upon assessment of the examination findings, recognizes the need for an urgent rather than a routine report to the supervising physician and takes appropriate action.
- 5.4 Notifies the supervising physician when immediate medical attention is necessary, based on the findings and patient condition.
- 5.5 Determines if additional medical imaging procedures are warranted and initiates the prescription for the procedure, following consultation with the supervising physician.
- 5.6 Evaluates the patient's physical and mental status prior to discharge from the medical imaging department and provides postcare instructions as determined by the licensed physician..
- 5.7 Provides an internal technical report containing a summary of preliminary findings to the interpreting physician.
- 5.8 Provides a dictated technical report of the findings for review by the interpreting physician, as determined by the policies of the health care facility and/or physician practice group.

## STANDARD SIX

### DOCUMENTATION

**Standard #6:** Clear and concise documentation is necessary for continuity of care, accuracy of care and quality assurance.

**Criteria:**

- 6.1 Documents diagnostic, treatment and patient data in the appropriate medical record , according to the policies of the employer.
- 6.2 Ensures that the documentation is timely, accurate, concise and complete.
- 6.3 Documents any modifications in the established protocol and any intravenous injections made before or during the procedures, to include dosage, in the appropriate medical record.
- 6.4 Provides the recorded documentation to the interpreting physician to facilitate the rendering of a diagnosis and for archival purposes.
- 6.5 Effectively communicates with members of the health care team regarding the findings of the imaging procedure(s) to promote quality health care for the patient.

**STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE  
FOR  
RADIOLOGY PRACTITIONER ASSISTANTS**

The Radiology Practitioner Assistant (RPA) recognizes his/her responsibility to aid the radiology profession in maintaining high standards in the provision of quality health care services and to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner when interacting with patients, physicians, colleagues, other health professionals and the general public.

**STANDARD ONE**

**QUALITY OF CARE**

**Standard #1:** Patients expect and deserve competent and excellent medical care during imaging procedures and trust that their dignity, health, safety and welfare will be maintained.

**Criteria:**

- 1.1 Obtains RPA certification and maintains the RPA professional credentials.
- 1.2 Adheres to the RPA scope of practice, code of ethics, standards of practice and policies and procedures adopted by the profession, health care facility, employer and state and federal regulations.
- 1.3 Provides the best possible diagnostic examination for each patient by applying professional judgement, prudence and discretion.
- 1.4 Is attuned to and responds to the needs of the patient, regardless of gender, age, race, creed, socio-economic, disease or political status.
- 1.5 Effectively cooperates with other health care professionals to provide the best medical care for all patients.
- 1.6 Participates in quality assurance and quality management programs.
- 1.7 Maintains professional credentials and practices current medical imaging procedures through active participation in continuing education.

## STANDARD TWO

### SELF-ASSESSMENT

**Standard #2:** To promote personal and professional growth, the RPA engages in a program of self-evaluation of professional performance, knowledge and skills.

**Criteria:**

- 2.1 Performs medical imaging procedures and evaluates images only after receiving appropriate education and demonstration of clinical competency, as determined by a supervising licensed physician.
- 2.2 Recognizes personal strengths and uses them to benefit patients, coworkers and the profession.
- 2.3 Performs procedures only when educationally prepared and clinically competent.
- 2.4 Recognizes and takes advantage of educational opportunities, including improvement in performing imaging procedures, evaluation of medical images and in problem solving situations.
- 2.5 Actively participates in professional organizations.

## STANDARD THREE

### PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

**Standard #3:** Advancements in imaging technology, medical science and applications develop rapidly, requiring a commitment to professional education.

**Criteria:**

- 3.1 Maintains active professional credentials related to the professional discipline.
- 3.2 Participates in self study and in continuing education activities to enhance knowledge, skills and performance.
- 3.3 Participates in scholarly activities, such as, research, scientific investigation, presentations and publications to advance the profession and promote the quality of patient care and services.

## STANDARD FOUR

### COLLABORATION

**Standard #4:** Quality health care in radiology services is promoted when members of the health care team communicate and collaborate effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the patient.

**Criteria:**

- 4.1 Promotes an open and positive environment with members of the health care team to enhance communication and collaboration.
- 4.2 Effectively communicates with members of the health care team regarding the welfare of the patient.
- 4.3 Informally shares knowledge and expertise with other health professionals, and formally through professional presentations and lectures.

## STANDARD FIVE

### ETHICAL CONDUCT

**Standard #5:** All decisions made and actions taken on behalf of the patient, other health care workers and the public adhere to the established professional *Code of Ethics and Rules of Ethics* and the addendum published by the Certification Board for Radiology Practitioner Assistants (CBRPA), and upon which the accepted professional standards are based.

**Criteria:**

- 5.1 Adheres to the accepted professional ethical standards as defined in the professional *Code of Ethics* and the CBRPA addendum to the *Code of Ethics*.
- 5.2 Is responsible and accountable for professional judgements and decisions.
- 5.3 Acts as a patient advocate in support of the patient's rights.
- 5.4 Respects the patient's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- 5.4 Provides patient care with respect for the patient's dignity and needs.
- 5.5 Respects and promotes the patient's rights.
- 5.6 Delivers the needed radiology health care services without discrimination.
- 5.7 Provides only those services qualified for via education and demonstrated clinical competency.
- 5.8 Adheres to the professional standards of practice.