

# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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Writer's Direct Dial:

January 10, 2017

(504) \_\_\_\_\_

Re: Sonographers; Scope of Practice

Dear :

At its December 2016, meeting the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners (the "Board"), considered your inquiry as to whether "state law allows sonographers to start an intravenous line and administer contrast?"<sup>1</sup> The Board has asked that I acknowledge your inquiry, apologize for the delay in responding and relay its advice.

Initially, Louisiana law does not provide a class of licensure for *ultrasonographers* or *sonographers*. Because the activities that you have described constitute the practice of medicine, as defined by the Louisiana Medical Practice Act (the "Act"), La. Rev. Stat. §37:1261 *et seq.*,<sup>2</sup> such may only be undertaken or performed in this state by a Louisiana licensed physician,<sup>3</sup> a Louisiana licensed allied health care provider whose scope of licensure may include starting IVs and administering contrast, or an unlicensed individual who functions solely under a Louisiana licensed physician's direction and immediate personal supervision—*i.e.*, where the physician is physically present in the office or suite *at all times* that an unlicensed assistant is providing the service (irrespective of such individual's level of training or experience). An unlicensed individual filling such a position could not—and may not be permitted under any circumstances—to act independently of a licensed physician or exercise independent medical judgment in initiating an IV or selecting or administering contrast. If an unlicensed individual acts beyond this scope he or she (and perhaps the physician as well) would be in violation of the Louisiana Medical Practice Act.

Finally, while the physician who delegates a medical task need not personally train the unlicensed individual to provide the service, the physician retains full responsibility to patients (and the Board) for the training, delivery and results of all services rendered.

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<sup>1</sup>Email to La. St. Bd. Med. Exam. (Oct. 28, 2016).

<sup>2</sup>In pertinent part, as defined by the Act, the "practice of medicine" means

[T]he holding out of one's self to the public as being engaged in the business of, of the actual engagement in, the diagnosing, treating curing, or relieving of any bodily or mental disease, condition, infirmity, deformity, defect, ailment, or injury in any human being...whether by the use of any drug, instrument or force...or any other agency or means; or the examining...of any person or material from any person for such purpose....

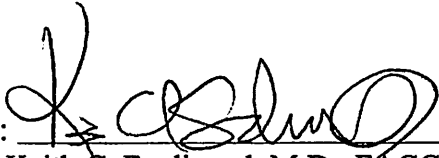
La. Rev. Stat. §37:1262(1).

<sup>3</sup>La. Rev. Stat. §37:1271 provides that "[n]o person shall practice medicine...as defined herein until he possesses a duly recorded license" issued by the Board.

We hope that this is responsive to your request. If not, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF  
MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

By:   
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Keith C. Ferdinand, M.D., FACC, FAHA  
*Interim Executive Director*