

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

House Bill 634

(Delegate George, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Rules

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Physician Assistants - Performance of X-ray Duties

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This bill authorizes a licensed physician assistant (PA) who has completed a specified training course to perform nonfluoroscopic x-ray procedures under specified circumstances. A PA may only perform nonfluoroscopic x-ray procedures of the extremities (anterior-posterior and lateral, excluding the head) and may only perform such duties pursuant to a delegation agreement approved by the State Board of Physicians that includes a request to perform such x-ray procedures as an advanced duty.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill does not materially affect board operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Generally, an individual must be a licensed radiographer in order to perform x-ray duties. An individual may perform x-ray duties without a license only if the duties (1) do not include computerized or noncomputerized tomography, fluoroscopy, invasive radiology, mammography, nuclear medicine, radiation therapy, or xerography; (2) are limited to x-ray procedures of the chest (anterior-posterior and lateral), spine (anterior-posterior and lateral), or extremities (anterior-posterior and lateral, not including the head); and (3) are performed by an individual who is not employed primarily to perform x-ray duties, in the medical office of the physician who delegates the duties, and by an individual with specified training who has passed a specified examination.

To qualify for licensure as a radiographer, an individual must, among other requirements, graduate from an approved program of radiation therapy, radiography, or a nuclear medicine technology program and be certified by the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists or Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board.

A PA is not authorized to practice independent of a supervising physician. A PA may only be certified to practice medical acts after the Physician Assistant Advisory Committee has approved a delegation agreement formed between a supervisory physician and a PA.

To qualify for a certificate, a PA must have graduated from a PA training program, pass a board-approved national certifying exam, and have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent if he or she graduated from a PA training program after October 1, 2003. The board may issue a temporary certificate to an applicant who has met specified requirements but has not yet passed the national certifying exam. A PA may not practice within the scope of any of the following health occupations: nursing, optometry, physical therapy, or psychology.

Patient services that may be provided by a PA include:

- taking patient histories and reviewing patient records to develop medical status reports;
- performing physical examinations and recording patient data;
- interpreting and evaluating patient data as authorized by the supervising physician to determine management and treatment of patients;
- initiating requests for or performing diagnostic procedures as indicated by pertinent data and authorized by the supervising physician;
- providing instructions and guidance regarding medical care matters to patients;
- assisting the supervising physician in the delivery of services to patients, including recording patient progress notes, issuing diagnostic orders, and transcribing or executing specific orders at the direction of the supervising physician; and
- exercising prescriptive authority under a delegation agreement.

Advanced duties are medical acts that require additional training beyond the basic PA education program required for licensure. PAs must obtain prior board approval before practicing any advanced duty. PAs must submit to the board specific training and education documentation, including procedure logs, advanced education and training, and consent forms.

Under the Maryland Department of the Environment's *Regulations for the Control of Ionizing Radiation*, a licensed practitioner of the healing arts or a radiological technologist may energize a fluoroscopic x-ray system. All persons energizing the system must complete at least four hours of specified training prior to clinical use and obtain one hour of in-service training or continuing education every 24 months. Users of a C-arm fluoroscope manufactured exclusively for imaging extremities (such as a mini C-arm) are exempt from these training and continuing education requirements.

**Background:** Mini C-arms are medical devices that allow health care practitioners to capture a digitally enhanced diagnostic x-ray with a lesser level of radiation than a traditional x-ray. The devices are used by professional and collegiate athletic teams and are also used in at least eight urgent care clinic locations in Maryland. A mini C-arm device has multiple imaging modes, including snapshot for a single image and continuous for use with fluoroscopy.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** HB 965 of 2011, a bill with a more limited but similar authorization, was heard by the House Health and Government Operations Committee but was later withdrawn.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 1, 2012  
mc/ljm Revised - Updated Information - March 2, 2012  
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